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Ernest Angley



Oral Roberts



W. V. Grant



Pat Robertson

FAITH-HEALING Miracle or Fraud?

An Investigation of faith-healers

by James Randi, Paul Kurtz, Joseph Barnhart, Philip Singer

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Humanism and Religion

After poring over "Is Secular Humanism a Religion?" (FI, Winter 1985/86), it strikes me that the aversion to religion is not so much to religion per se as it is to institutionalized religion. This distinction was made, clearly I think, in the First Amendment, when lawmakers were told they could not tilt toward (or even mention) an *establishment* of religion but at the same time they must respect the "free exercise" of religion. The difference is between brand name and generic.

The secularist debate has to do principally with word meanings and is reminiscent of the argument about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. Rather than engendering divisiveness, one should consider that the terms *religion* and *ligament* both derive from the same Latin word meaning "binding" and "tying together." As has been said, "The desire for freedom is a ligament uniting all peoples."

Louis Worth Jones
San Mateo, Calif.

I share Sidney Hook's concern over the improper use of the term *God*, as expressed in his provocative article "Pluralistic Humanism" (Winter 1985/86). Professor Hook tells about talking with John Dewey concerning the manuscript of Dewey's book *A Common Faith* (1934). There, Hook states, Dewey defined god as "the union of the ideal and the real." Hook believes that Dewey thus incorporated the word "God" in his philosophy of Naturalism.

However, in 1935 I corresponded with John Dewey about this very matter and asked him specifically about the relevant sentence in *A Common Faith*: "It is the active relation between the ideal and actual to which I would give the name 'God.'" He answered in a letter dated August 16, 1935: "I suppose one of the first things I learned in grammar was the difference between *will* and *shall*, and the consequent difference between *would* and *should*. But nevertheless I made a bad slip which accounts for the fact that you thought I was making a recommendation. The meaning in my mind was essentially: if the word 'God' is used, that is what it *should* stand for; I didn't have a

recommendation in mind beyond the proper use of a word. . . . I got my auxiliary verbs mixed."

Of course, as Hook indicates, Christian clergymen and theologians soon triumphantly claimed Dewey as a theist and even went so far as to ascribe to him a theology. My correspondence with Dewey was published in *The Journal of Philosophy*, January 5, 1961, and later in my book *Voice in the Wilderness* (1974). The letters in question are preserved in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

In conclusion, regarding the never-ending controversy over the meaning and existence of God, I like to quote a brief poem by Paul Kirkpatrick entitled "God":

Then let us debate him with
Zealous persistence,
Knowing before we begin,
That I can define him out of existence
And you can define him back in.

Corliss Lamont
New York, N.Y.

Sidney Hook, in "Pluralistic Humanism," writes that "in some countries like . . . Israel, where church and state are not separated, the state of religious freedom is as healthy as it is in the United States." This statement is just plain false. In Israel and its occupied territories, non-Jews are discriminated against in areas of employment, residency, travel, availability of reading material, access to free press, social services, military service, judicial procedures, the right of peaceful protest, and in many other ways. In fact, if a Jew converts to another religion, he/she loses his/her nationality and thereby becomes a second-class citizen. Dr. Hook will find documentation of this discrimination readily available if he takes the time to look for it.

David D. Van Strien
Peterborough, N.H.

I call myself a "scientific humanist" because I believe our universe to be an organic (material) whole. It follows that the universe expresses itself through me, and I affect its

movement by my choices.

A moral philosophy of the macrocosm can exclude the concepts of anthropomorphic theism advanced by major religions, yet still transmit the beauty, power, and even the necessity of personal congruence with universal laws. In plain words, we may find ourselves closer to God without religion than through it.

The time has come for reconciliation between theist and atheist. The theist should accept the fact that the personality of God is the personality of our universe, which includes all of us, our worst with our best. The atheist should recognize that this universe is alive, and its traditional name is God.

Lance Jencks
Irvine, Calif.

Homer Duncan's Crusade

I am surprised that you would let Mr. Duncan get the better of you (FI, Winter 1985/86). I should think you would know that fundamentalists, when they cannot convert you, are satisfied to put you on the defensive, which is what he did. And the correspondence stopped as soon as you let him do it. When you expressed shock at the brutality of his indirect affront, you let up on your attack and gave him the field. Logic, fairness, and truth mean nothing to these people because these weaken the faith. Fundamentalists practice power politics. One of the fatal errors you made was in being nice, which is not productive. Duncan did not follow the rules of gentlemanly conduct toward you and, when you were a gentleman to him, he took advantage of it and struck a blow to your midsection. Such a person does not merit courteous treatment, he simply needs to be dealt a crushing defeat. That's what he would do to you. He would rise to power riding on your back and he would beat you into the ground with your own kindness if you let him.

Hampton Burt
Houston, Tex.

I suspect the fear of a fundamentalist onslaught expressed by the secular-humanist contingent, while not totally unfounded, is an overreaction. I am quite confident that a flood of intelligent reasoning will come to the forefront as the need arises. In the meantime you are to be lauded for the excellent and always logical responses to the "keepers

of the keys of the kingdom" and their endeavors to bind up the minds of men with all manner of shackles. History has shown that any attempt to thwart the growth of intellect has met with failure. I am thankful that we are privy to the intellectual exchanges of people like Hook, Kurtz, and Fletcher, and the many other contributors who grace your pages. It is indeed an education.

Jerry E. Felkel
Great Bend, Kans.

Homer Duncan is blind to the element of self, fallible self, in all his thinking. He is but the latest of the innumerable number of would-be spokesmen for various gods and absolutes who domineer over human cultures under guise of having direct transmission lines to supernaturally transcendent "Truths," exempt from all human critical inquiry. A little humility is in order, but never expect to find it among such charlatan "prophets."

C. L. Hubbell
Chicago, Ill.

I have reached the conclusion that Duncan, Fletcher, Hook, and Kurtz exist. I was uncertain about whether George Bernard Shaw ever existed apart from his characters, and if it really mattered. God and Satan caused me the greatest difficulty. I knew that God and Satan were notorious liars, having read what they had to say about each other and themselves. God insisted that Satan existed and Satan insisted that god existed. They both swore on a stack of Bibles. I finally reached the conclusion that God and Satan were one and the same and that each had made the other up. Thank you all for having clarified this vital matter.

G. Merle Bergman
Los Angeles, Calif.

The Lord Jesus said, "Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you" (Luke 6:26). So I guess I am on pretty good ground. The Jehovah's Witnesses have called me "a thief, a liar, and a leech." A little peajinker (James Robert Martin) reviewed my book *Secular Humanism: The Most Dangerous Religion in America* in the Winter 1981/82 issue of *FREE INQUIRY* and made the statement that "many extremist fundamentalists are energetically selective in choosing passages from the Bible to support their glozing lies. . . ."

When I met this fine chap in Buffalo, I asked him to call to my attention some of the "glozing lies" in my book. I have not heard from him.

Now, along comes Joseph Fletcher, who accuses me of "lying for God's sake" ("Homer Duncan's Crusade Against Secular Humanism," *FI*, Winter 1985/86). All of this got started two or three years ago when my pastor read a statement supposedly made by George Bernard Shaw. He had taken the statement from the card file of the Dallas Theological Seminary, and I thought that was a rather good source of information. The three-by-five-inch card read as follows.

SCIENCE, BANKRUPTCY OF

George Bernard Shaw is perhaps the most renowned in the world as freethinker and liberal philosopher. In his writings, he says, "The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. Its counsels, which should have established the millennium, led directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once. In their name I helped destroy the faith of millions of worshippers in the temples of a thousand creeds. And now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost faith."

That seemed to me to be a pretty powerful statement, so I made copies and sent them to twenty to thirty atheists, including Joseph Fletcher. I will not quote all of Fletcher's letter to me demanding documentation for the statement, but among other things Fletcher wrote, "I'm beginning to suspect you have made a booboo which will be a big black eye to your cause. This is, as I say, the last warning. You'd better get back with evidence or a confession."

So, I did my best to come up with documentation for the statement. I sent letters to several people in the U.S. and to all of our readers in England. I sent a copy of the supposed statement from Shaw and a copy of Fletcher's letter with its threats.

Most of the replies I received were dry holes, but the needed information began to come in. For example, Mr. T. H. Evans of the University of London wrote:

The passage beginning "The science to which I pinned my faith. . . ." is from a speech by a character called "The Elder" in Shaw's play, *Too True to Be Good*. . . . The speech is a little less than half way through the third act of the play.

Mr. B. H. Butler of the Moorlands Bible College wrote, "The reference is found

in his play *Too True to Be Good*, Act III." Others sent me the same information, and I passed copies of the letters on to Dr. Fletcher and thought the matter was settled, and for my part it was forgotten.

But now, several years later, dear Joe accuses me of lying on God's behalf. And Paul Kurtz seemingly did not know any better than to publish Fletcher's accusations.

If it will help ease Fletcher's pain, I gladly confess I made a mistake in sending out incorrect information, which I had received from the Dallas Theological Seminary, which in some way got the wrong information on a card in their library in their file. If you wish to call my mistake "lying" it is your privilege to do so. However, it seems to me that the shoe is on the other foot. Judge for yourself who is doing the lying.

Most atheists are thin-skinned and cannot stand criticism. Saving face is very important to them. I am not in the least concerned about what a bunch of atheists think about me. I know where I stand with God, and that is all that matters. I know I am clothed with the perfect righteousness of Christ (Phil. 3:8, 9). I am accepted in Christ (Eph. 1:6).

Say, Joe, if you are going to fight in this battle, you had better use something besides a pea shooter. In West Texas we use 44 magnums, or at least 357.

Homer Duncan
Lubbock, Tex.

Ernest Nagel

Mourning the loss of Ernest Nagel, as so many do, I was comforted by Sidney Hook's eloquent memorial tribute to him (*FI*, Winter 1985/86). And I was glad that it included this commendation: "But refusing to evade issues by professing agnosticism or by coining new and arbitrary meanings for the terms *God* and *immortality*, he courageously espoused a philosophical atheism that challenged the whole array of fundamentalist revivals of our time."

What is saddening, however, is that, though we do not live in a theocratic state, it was nonetheless "courageous" on Ernest Nagel's part to be a professed philosophical atheist. One would have hoped that, in an avowedly free society, the rejection of the hypothesis of theism as ill-supported should not require any more courage than its acceptance. The more so, since even the dog-

(Continued on p. 62)

Faith Healing: Miracle or Fraud?

Introduction: The Need for Investigation

Paul Kurtz

The electronic church has become big business. The names of television and radio evangelists are by now household words; they continue to grow in influence, raking in large sums of money, extending their power, and exporting their messages worldwide.

The political power, real and potential, of star preachers like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson has been widely critiqued, particularly by their political opponents.

One stock-in-trade of the televangelists that has not been given adequate attention is faith-healing. The healing tradition has deep roots in primitive cultures. It is found in the Bible and throughout history, particularly before the growth of modern medicine. Priests/healers/physicians have always played a role in helping to relieve anxiety and cure illness. They have used a variety of methods, from the laying on of hands to the exorcism of demons. Faith-healing has played a prominent role in Roman Catholic history, and miraculous cures were attributed not only to saints but to relics and shrines as well.

Fortunately, with the advance of science and technology, most people have turned to medical practitioners for the cure of illness; superstition and belief in miraculous heal-

ings have waned. It has been a long, hard struggle to apply medical science to the alleviation of human suffering. This has been done with tremendous effectiveness: the mitigation of pain, the cure of infectious diseases, modern surgery, and the transplant of organs, all hold great promise for public health and welfare.

However, the medical profession is not immune to criticism, and alternative therapies have been noticeably increasing in popularity. The growth of holistic medicine, for example, is symptomatic of this changing attitude. The increase in malpractice suits and public discussions of problems of medical ethics, particularly regarding euthanasia and abortion, have raised profound ethical dilemmas. Since no institution in modern society is infallible the continuing evaluation of the methods and results of medical research and practice is essential. Nonetheless, in spite of its limits, the science of medicine uses the best methods available for diagnosing and treating illnesses. Yet large sections of the public are being taken in by television healers who enter their homes and make exaggerated paranormal claims that challenge the very basis of science. America today is flooded with quack cures and nostrums. It is difficult to evaluate

the extent to which this shift has occurred. But it is clear that questionable faith-healing techniques are a basic staple of television ministries.

Critics who view these programs deplore their crass commercialism and the blatant fraud and deceit associated with them. Given the separation of church and state, government agencies like the FCC, the FTC, and the Department of Justice have been unwilling to speak out about such practices. Nor has there been public criticism by the American Medical Association or other professional medical groups. The AMA once had a Committee on Quackery, which monitored questionable health cures. Unfortunately, it went out of existence in 1975 and has never been revived. The salient fact is that religion is often considered immune to criticism. Protecting First Amendment rights is one thing; damaging the health of millions of people is another.

In our view, it is important that claims made by faith-healers be submitted to careful scrutiny. This is precisely what FREE INQUIRY and the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER) recently set out to do: to analyze and evaluate faith-healing televangelists and their methods. We commissioned a team of researchers to begin a field investigation.

Although there are many faith-healers roving the land—Ernest Angley, W. V. Grant, Peter Popoff, Oral Roberts, Pat Robertson, et al.—we decided to focus primarily on two television evangelists: W. V. Grant of the Evangelist Association, whose main headquarters is in Cincinnati, Ohio, but whose church is in Dallas, Texas, and Ernest Angley, whose television ministries are headquartered in Akron, Ohio. These evangelist healers claim to be seen by many millions of viewers every week over hundreds of television stations.

On November 4, 1985, we dispatched to St. Louis, Missouri, James Randi, noted psychic researcher and conjurer, and Professor Joseph Barnhart of North Texas State University. Assisting them was Walter Hoops, of the American Rationalist Association and several of his associates. We sent several people into the auditorium where the Reverend W. V. Grant was conducting a healing session. More than two thousand leaflets were distributed to members of the audience asking anyone who believed they had been healed to contact us. Careful atten-

tion was paid to those who said they had been healed publicly, and the team attempted to follow out of the auditorium those the Reverend Grant had proclaimed miracle cures. All of those who were willing were questioned, and their responses were tape recorded. Where possible, their names and addresses were obtained for follow-up interviews.

W. V. Grant publishes a magazine called *New Day*, where he often cites the names and cities of people he has healed. We attempted to obtain the telephone numbers or addresses of those listed. We were especially interested in a claimed cure of a man in Atlanta, and we sent Randi to Atlanta to investigate the case in cooperation with a physician. We also did a similar investigation of a healing session that Grant later conducted in Fort Lauderdale. Randi's report appears in this issue.

This special issue also contains an article by Professor Barnhart on Grant and Oral Roberts and an independent study by Professor Philip Singer of Oakland University on Grant's "cures."

We also sent a team to Akron to observe the healing sessions of the Reverend Ernest Angley on January 10 and 11, 1986. In this case, besides James Randi and myself, the team included Richard Seymour and Vance Vigrass of the FREE INQUIRY staff. While in Akron, we had the help of Professor William McMahon of the Philosophy Department of the University of Akron, his son Cole, and Professor James Griffis, also of the University of Akron. My report of this investigation also appears in this issue. Also included are brief analyses of Pat Robertson and Peter Popoff based on their television broadcasts.

It is clear that these FREE INQUIRY/CSER investigations are just the first step. We believe it important to continue these efforts. We intend to send investigators to observe other faith-healers and to publish the results of these inquiries. We believe the public has a right to the evidence, and particularly to the conclusions we have reached about the efficacy of faith-healing. We also hope that others will be encouraged to engage in further inquiry and criticism. •



Televangelism's Roster

The best known of today's faith-healers are a part of a larger group of preachers who reach their flock through the air waves and are known as "televangelists." Millions of persons tune in to their weekly broadcasts. Among those who feature faith-healing are:

Oral Roberts. Roberts is building a \$100 million "City of Faith" in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in which he plans to combine the most advanced medical treatment and equipment with the healing power of God. His Oral Roberts University in the same city has more than 4,500 students and an annual budget of \$50 million. Roberts films his shows in a studio on campus.

Pat Robertson. Robertson's "700 Club" is part of the fare of his Christian Broadcast Network—only one-third of its programming is religious. The son of a former senator from Virginia and himself a Yale Law School graduate, Robertson is currently reshaping his image into one worthy of a United States presidential contender.

Ernest Angley. Angley claims his "Ernest Angley Hour" and the "Ninety and Nine Club" air in more than one hundred markets in the United States, Canada, the Philippines, and Africa. His Grace Cathedral is in Akron, Ohio, where he also owns a television station.

W. V. Grant. The son of a Texas evangelist, W. V. Grant runs a mail-order business from a post-office box in Cincinnati, Ohio, and broadcasts his show "Dawn of a New Day" from his Eagle's Nest cathedral in Dallas. His show purportedly reaches viewers of three hundred television stations across the continent. He also publishes the magazine *New Day*.

Peter Popoff. Popoff broadcasts his healing sessions from Upland, California. He also asks for donations to purchase Bibles to send to the U.S.S.R.

An era in televangelism came to an end recently with the death at age ninety-three of **Herbert W. Armstrong.** Armstrong was the first to ascend the "electronic pulpit" with the broadcast of his radio show "The World Tomorrow" in 1934. The new version of this program is now aired on more than 400 television stations and 150 radio stations.

Armstrong also published the magazine *Plain Truth*, which prophecies doomsday and the imminent appearance of Jesus on earth. Although his Worldwide Church of God has only 80,000 members, its annual \$70 million income is larger than that of the Billy Graham and Oral Roberts organizations combined.

In years past, Armstrong's operation was tainted by scandal—financial irresponsibility in the church and personal misconduct by his son Garner Ted Armstrong. After it was the target of several lawsuits, the Worldwide Church of God pressured the California legislature into passing a law barring the state's attorney general from investigating religious organizations accused of misuse of funds or internal civil fraud.

Shortly before his death, Armstrong named as his successor fifty-nine-year-old Joseph K. Tkach, who had served as director of church administration for six years.

The other televangelists include:

Jim Bakker. Bakker got his start in television thirteen years ago. He worked for fellow evangelists Pat Robertson and Paul Crouch before starting his own program, the "PTL [Praise The Lord] Club." It is seen on more than two hundred commercial and three thousand cable television stations. In addition to his talk-show, Bakker's 24-hour cable network broadcasts religious programs, sports, sitcoms, variety shows, and "soaps." Bakker's purchases of expensive real estate in California and luxury automobiles have been reported in the press.

Jimmy Swaggart. One of the most emotional of the televangelists, Swaggart combines preaching with singing on his program. He constantly rails against secular humanists and claims to reach 3.5 million viewers worldwide.

Robert Schuller. Schuller's "Hour of Power" is broadcast from his Crystal Cathedral, a \$20-million structure in southern California that is bigger than Notre Dame. It seats three thousand people. Schuller's broadcasts also reach the seven thousand persons who sit in their cars in the Cathedral's parking lot and, he claims, millions worldwide. He promises earthly

rewards, often financial in nature, for Christian belief.

Kenneth Copeland. This former disciple of Oral Roberts was a country-and-western singer and a football player before he became a televangelist. His program is called "Voice of Victory."

Rex Humbard. Another pioneer in televangelism, Humbard made his first television program in 1952. After he updated his show to appeal to modern tastes in 1980, Humbard claimed 100 million viewers worldwide—and to accommodate them, he broadcast his sermons in six languages. His fourteen-member family was featured on the show. Humbard's operation has been taken over by Ernest Angley.

Jerry Falwell. The head of the Moral Majority (now the Liberty Federation), Falwell is the most influential of the modern-day evangelists in the print media and in politics. He has a 17,000-member church in Virginia and is the temporary head of Maine's largest fundamentalist Baptist church, whose former pastor has been charged with adultery. Falwell is also the head of Liberty Baptist College, which has some five thousand students. Falwell's television program, "The Old Time Gospel Hour," is carried on four hundred stations around the world.

Billy Hargis. Hargis, the leader of the Crusade for Christian Morality, has admitted to both heterosexual and homosexual affairs. He defends these activities with passages from the Bible.

Billy Graham. Another founder of modern televangelism, Graham has reduced his television appearances in recent years and dissociated himself from the other televangelists.

D. James Kennedy. Kennedy is one of the most sophisticated of the group, staging dignified and theologically complex worship services. His weekly program is seen on more than one hundred television stations and three cable networks.

Paul Crouch. Crouch owns his own television station in Florida. His Trinity Broadcast Network is based in California and is carried on 350 cable systems. Crouch and his wife own seven UHF stations in small markets.—Andrea Szalanski

“Be Healed in the Name of God!”

An Exposé of the Reverend W. V. Grant

James Randi

There is, in the majority of religions, a history of miraculous cures effected by the touch of a prominent individual; contact with a sacred relic, amulet, or place; or anointment with sanctified oil, water, or any other medium presented by chance or intent to the ailing. As in the practice of all magic, participation in these “cures” is an attempt by Man to control nature by means of spells, incantations, or ritual. The effectiveness of these measures has been discussed for centuries, but the power of suggestion is only now beginning to be understood.

Because monarchs ruled by divine right, they were believed to have the ability to heal. Thus originated the “Royal Touch” that was said to be effective against scrofula, a disease known as the “King’s Evil.” Certainly kings had some effect upon psychosomatic and quite imaginary ailments, and subjects eagerly provided affidavits to support strong faith in this sort of healing.

Healing by contact with or in the presence of holy relics, which enters history in the third century, should be a much bigger business than it is considering the plethora of objects that are said to have been the possessions or actual physical parts of various saints and biblical characters. One avid German collector claimed to have more than 17,000 of these objects, which inspired Pope Leo X to calculate that this devout chap

had saved himself exactly 694,779,550.5 days in purgatory by such pious devotion to his hobby. His hoard included bones from the children slain by Herod, a crust of bread from the Last Supper, a jar containing a sample of the Virgin Mary’s milk, and a hair from Christ’s beard. But he was outdone by the Schlosskirche at Halle, which boasted 21,483 relics in its vaults.

Though all Protestant denominations long ago condemned the veneration of such objects and their use in healing, the Catholic church permits and even encourages the practice. Pieces of the true cross, toenails of St. Peter, the bodies of St. Stephen and the three wise kings, several heads, or parts of one, all claimed to have belonged to John the Baptist, sixteen foreskins of Christ, Mary Magdalene’s entire skeleton, and scraps of bread and fish left over from feeding the five-thousand, not to mention a few shrouds—including the one at Turin—are exhibited at various Catholic churches.

Christianity, beginning with the New Testament, has a history of miraculous cures credited to the touch of many of its luminaries. The apostles and their successors were said to have performed the “laying on of hands,” taught to them by their master. Reformer Martin Luther, in the sixteenth century, took credit for spontaneous cures, while at the same time savants like Paracelsus were attempting, with highly varying degrees of success, to evolve the superstition of magic into what we know today as the science of medicine. Mormons and Episcopalians have established a history of faith cures as part of their theologies, and Mary Baker Eddy founded her Christian Science church solely on the notions that pain is an illusion and bacteria are the result rather than the cause of disease.

In the 1870s, faith-healing became very popular and widely practiced in London, and it continues to attract followers in England. Elsewhere, the tombs of Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, and others are said to have caused miracle cures for those who visited them. The town of Lourdes, in France, is the site of a shrine that has long been held to bring about healing as a result of a visitation by the Virgin Mary.

The Reverend William Branham, a preacher from Jeffer-

James Randi is a magician and lecturer who has been investigating psychic claims for thirty years. He is a Consultant to the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion and is at work on a new book, The Faith-Healers, to be published by Prometheus Books later this year.



sonville, Indiana, is credited with initiating the present evangelical/fundamentalist healing movement in the 1940s. Pastor Branham was so convincing a preacher that, when he died in 1965, his burial was postponed for four months because his flock expected him to rise from the dead at Easter. He didn't.

Radio, and then television, brought the movement into full bloom. Protected by the First Amendment, anyone capable of speaking in public became eligible to dispense interpretations of holy writings. An occasional individual took his or her inspiration from vaudeville, applying psychological techniques and razzmatazz to build an act that the Internal Revenue Service would never trouble, Congress would never question, and the law would find completely insulated by the Constitution against charges of fraud and deception.

Faith-healing is difficult to differentiate from witchcraft, which in its healing aspects is involved with expelling evil spirits from the body. The modern witch-doctor in Africa still calls on primitive "show biz" when he "pulls the thorn" by applying his mouth to a wound or an ailing portion of the body, producing by sleight of hand a thorn, a stone, or a sliver that is said to be either the actual cause of pain or the material representation of a demon or devil. Thousands of doctors and nurses in the United States have joined the International Order of St. Luke the Physician, which stresses a spiritual approach to the practice of medicine, thus identifying with if not actually practicing witchcraft.

A Catholic healer, Father Ralph DiOrio, of Worcester, Massachusetts, specializes in the "slaying of the spirit." During this ritual, the afflicted person falls over when the healer gestures. This is an expected reaction, and it's a case of "monkey see, monkey do." DiOrio claims he has healed every conceivable kind of emotional, physical, and spiritual defect. However, consider the testimony of one healed devotee of Father Ralph, published in *Fate* magazine:

I suffered a neck injury . . . a long time ago . . . and I have had breathing problems and pain . . . I attended Father DiOrio's charismatic service . . . I was sitting high in the third balcony . . . I heard [him] call my name, saying, "There's a Helen here with a cervical problem, a neck problem—I feel it happening—a healing is taking place." Out of all those thousands of people, I was not certain he meant me, because nowhere was my name or ailment given. But he DID mean me . . . [now] I do not have pain.

True, this woman's name is Helen. But how difficult was it for Father DiOrio to hit on a Helen with a neck pain in the Joe Louis Arena in Detroit, jammed with believers? It is very probable such a coincidence occurred. And, if not, are all the non-Helens ever going to know it? Of course not. A faith-healer can never be wrong with such a maneuver. D'Orio's "call out" allows for more than one interpretation. "Cervical" can refer to problems of the uterus, too, and this would have been a "hit" for Helen, had she been so afflicted. This fitted-evidence tendency is typical of many reports of miraculous healings.

My investigation of faith-healing has concentrated on one prominent healer about whom a great deal is known

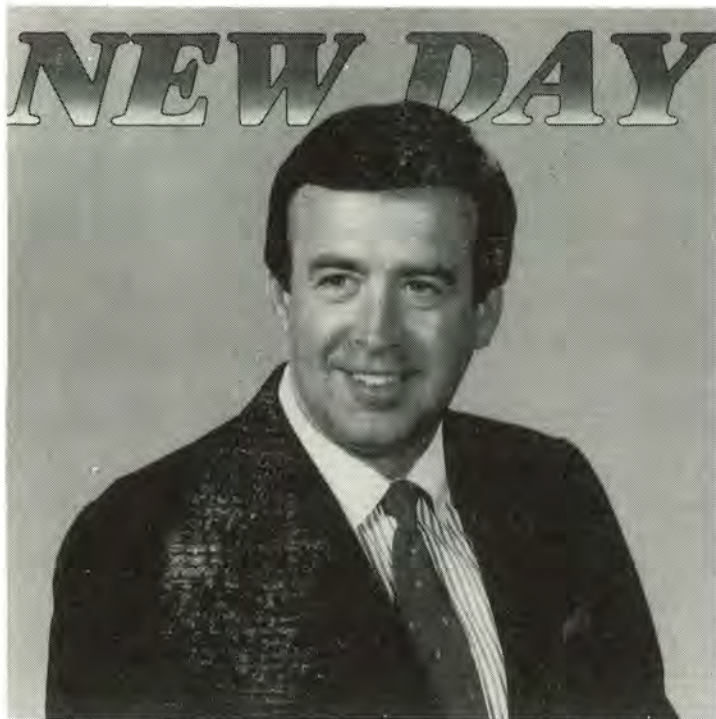
"At every revival meeting that Grant holds, people are commanded to get up out of their wheelchairs and run, not walk, up the aisle and back. . . . The deaf hear, the blind see, tumors vanish, and bacteria are slain at the wave of a hand. Miracles of every sort are plentiful."

and who is more readily accessible than most. He also makes more claims, is more careless about concealing his methods, and is one of the biggest moneymakers in the business. He is a healer of the sick, a minister of God, and a television star named Walter Vinson Grant.

W. V. Grant is the plumply handsome forty-year-old son of another evangelist who rose to moderate fame in Texas. He performs on stage dressed in very expensive well-tailored business suits set off by monogrammed shirts and elegant jewelry, looking like prosperity personified. He runs his mail-order business from a post-office box in Cincinnati, Ohio, and sells a book titled *God's Answers For You* ("made to sell for \$30" but available for fifteen dollars with "gold gilt-edged edges"), audiocassette cassettes of sermons, Bibles (half-price this month), and record albums and eight-tracks. He also sells booklets written by Grant, Sr., now deceased, as if they were his own. Winning titles among the sixty available (fifty cents each) include *The Great Dictator—The Man Whose Number Is 666*, *I Was a Cannibal*, *Men in Flying Saucers Identified*, *Faith for Finance*, and *Freedom From Evil Spirits*. He also sells a Bible course (sixty-four dollars) that offers the subscriber a purple and gold diploma as a real "Reverend" with an "honorary Doctor's Degree" and a "license to preach" after certain true-and-false questions have been answered. Grant will cut two dollars from the price for each "name of someone who wants this course" supplied to him by a customer.

Every Sunday Grant holds what he describes as "two great miracle services" at his home-base, the Eagle's Nest cathedral in Dallas. He claims his show, "Dawn of a New Day," appears on some three hundred television stations across the continent once or twice a week and that he has to spend more than \$8 million annually for air time alone. In his live revival meetings, as he tours the United States from coast to coast, miracles fall from his fingertips on all present. He fills dental cavities, straightens limbs, adds vertebrae to ailing backs, and cures tumors, deafness, blindness, digestive problems, "broken" and otherwise-damaged hearts, diabetes, paralysis, fractured bones, arthritis, gall-bladder conditions, high blood pressure, colitis, obesity, bone spurs, kidney problems, and almost any other disease our species is heir to—all by mumbling some magical syllables, touching the sufferers, and mightily grinding his teeth. (The magic words transcribe as: "Quah talah mokos! Stee keekeenee bahkus! Dee!")

It appears that Grant can also reverse hysterectomies. "When they opened me up, they found all my ovaries and tubes were back and they just couldn't understand it!" declared



New Day is a slick, full-color glossy magazine that W. V. Grant publishes several times a year. The issues are undated.

one woman. In another case, an afflicted woman had her "leg and foot" problems remedied by the Reverend Grant; "I couldn't wear high-healed [*sic*] shoes for 13-15 years," she wrote in her testimonial. "I praise the Lord that I can now." Is there no end to this man's good works?

At every revival meeting that Grant holds, people are commanded to get up out of their wheelchairs and run, not walk, up the aisle and back. Canes and walkers taken from the lame and crippled are dramatically broken and thrown onto the stage, while those who used them moments before trot about in ecstasy. Folks whose legs are different lengths straddle a pair of chairs onstage while the shorter leg appears to lengthen. The deaf hear, the blind see, tumors vanish, and bacteria are slain at the wave of a hand. Miracles of every sort are plentiful.

Perhaps these wonders needed looking into. Certainly, if any of Grant's claims were true, medical literature would have to be entirely rewritten. But I have always heeded an observation made by Benjamin Franklin, to wit: "There are no greater liars than quacks—except for their patients." I suspected that Grant and his peers depend upon the imagination of their clients for success, rather than upon their own hyperbole. Suggestion, too, in cases of psychosomatic illness, could be expected to play a part.

In a slick, full-color glossy (undated) magazine titled *New Day*, which Grant publishes several times a year, I noted the "Crusade Schedule" of Grant's personal appearances from Philadelphia to Honolulu for the upcoming nine months. On November 4, 1985, he was to appear in a huge auditorium in St. Louis, Missouri.

Paul Kurtz, editor of *FREE INQUIRY*, decided that Grant's claims needed careful scientific investigation. He and the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER) commissioned me to make an investigation and asked Professor

Joseph Barnhart, professor of philosophy at North Texas State University, to join me. Barnhart is an expert on religions and proved to be exceedingly valuable to the investigation. Kurtz also contacted Walter Hoops and other members of the Rationalist Association in St. Louis, who readily agreed to assist in the project. We had two questions to answer: Was Grant really healing people? How did he do his impressive "mind-reading" act? By arriving early, we hoped to be in on the entire operation and answer these questions. We also intended to pass out leaflets requesting any allegedly healed persons to contact us through the Rationalist Association's post-office box.

The Reverend Grant would have a rather pedestrian act to offer his audiences if it weren't for one particular attraction. As the traveling medicine shows of yore did, Grant needs a "hook" to grab the crowd. What sells the snake oil is a tactic known in the trade as "calling out" the customers, and it is used by several other evangelists as well. One known as David Paul has a less slick presentation, but uses the same gimmick just as effectively as Grant does. A Fort Lauderdale performer named Epley puts drama into the act by clawing at the air and straining to hear the wings of angels. "Calling out" consists of approaching individuals and addressing them by name, specifying their ailments, and identifying their physicians by name—and perhaps supplying details of their lives known only to themselves. The performer is careful to state that he has never met or spoken to the subject before and says that God has asked him to "call out" this person, giving the evangelist the information through the process of revelation. This ability is said to be one of the "nine gifts of the spirit" granted to certain "anointed" individuals—like W. V. Grant, for example.

If you think this sounds more like a description of the act offered by mentalist Kreskin, take ten points for perception. Kreskin, like Joseph Dunninger, the greatest mentalist who ever lived, offers his act as entertainment rather than religion, however. W. V. Grant, who has denied that what he is doing is "a magic act," not only gains the full attention of his audience by means of these tricks but also convinces them of his closeness to God. How he manages this clever deception, I will discuss shortly.

First, let us look into the question of whether Grant is actually able to heal the afflicted as he says he can. It would seem that checking his healing record would not be at all difficult. It would be a simple matter of following up on as many "healees" as we can find. But that can be a lengthy, harrowing, and often unsuccessful task. For instance, from a videotape of one of Grant's revival meetings in Atlanta, we were able to transcribe—from one healing ritual—the name of a patient, the names of the patient's six doctors, the hospital, the date of a specific planned coronary operation for the patient, and the patient's birthday. (Grant had even correctly divined a comment made by one of those six doctors.) Since the tape had been made less than four weeks before the broadcast, Kurtz and I decided that I should visit Atlanta under the auspices of CSER and find out whether the patient had undergone the operation and what his present condition was.

During his healing process, Grant had told this man that "Dr. Jesus" had put a new heart in his body by means of

"closed-heart surgery" and that he no longer needed orthodox "open-heart" surgery. In response to Grant's command, the patient, toothless and very advanced in years, trotted up the aisle and back to demonstrate the new heart. I felt that this case presented an ideal prospect for confirmation, since so much data had been given. In Atlanta, CSER enlisted the help of an associate at a medical school there and he agreed to try to contact the doctors named in the videotape. We were both in for a surprise.

Not one of the six doctors appeared in the current listing of the Medical Association of Georgia (MAG), which lists all of that state's more than eight thousand physicians, whether they are MAG members or not. Nor were those doctors listed as chiropractors. We found that the hospital had no such patient and no such operation planned for the date given. In fact, the hospital officials reported that they had never performed cardiac surgery at that facility. Furthermore, the pastor of the church named could not identify this person as a church member. We had apparently discovered an absolute "ringer"—the man, for one reason or another, had fabricated the whole story. And he made W. V. Grant and Dr. Jesus look pretty good in that videotape.

But another participant in the revival meeting in St. Louis, J. Elmo Clark, was a different story. He'd gone to Grant's service after having sent him a lot of money over a period of years. Mr. Clark was blind in one eye. He had seen Grant heal the sick on television and firmly believed he would be healed, too. We spoke to Clark two days after the meeting, and he was angry and upset. Grant had "called him out" of the audience, and announced his name, his doctor, and his ailment. But J. Elmo Clark is still blind in one eye, despite the fact that he believed he had regained his sight following some mumbo-jumbo by Grant. How this came about, we will learn later. Though Grant led his audience to believe that he'd restored Clark's vision, that claim was just not true.

Looking through *New Day*, we found names of many persons who had testified to their healings. One was a man from Erie, Pennsylvania, who stated, concerning his encounter with Grant eighteen months before, that his healing was still in effect. "For 20 years, I had sugar diabetes," he said, "and thank God I am healed." (Grant refers to diabetes as either "sugar diabetes" or just "sugar"—as in his expression, "You've got the sugar, haven't you?") FREE INQUIRY discovered the man's name and telephone number. When we contacted him by telephone, he was wary. He wanted to be assured that we weren't trying to falsify any of Grant's work. All I could tell him was that we were investigating the whole matter without prejudice. Reassured, he told us that, although he knew his doctor would disagree with him, he no longer had diabetes. He was still taking insulin (the standard treatment for this ailment), but the dose was smaller, he said. The impression I got was that he could not contemplate discrediting faith-healing and that he was clinging to his preferred—and comforting—belief. The fact remains that this man, despite his wishes and his faith and Grant's intercession with supernatural forces, was not and is not healed.

Others who testified in *New Day* could not be found, even

though some of their names were quite unusual.

In 1982, Mrs. Pearl Kidd of Racine, Wisconsin, had been angry enough to tell a reporter that a full-color photograph of her husband, Morris, had been run in *New Day* with the caption: "This Milwaukee man was blind all of his life. After Rev. Grant prayed, he saw for the first time." Said Mrs. Kidd, "What miracle?" Her spouse, she said, was still almost totally blind, and she resented this lie appearing in print. First of all, Mr. Kidd had not been "blind all of his life." His sight had been deteriorating only for a few years. The photo and caption were misleading. "It was just a hoax," Mrs. Kidd said, and she suggested that Grant should be "put out of business for lying to people."

Mr. Kidd had been carrying a white cane when he attended the service. Suffering from an incurable, degenerative eye disease, he could see very little. Grant had declared him healed and had thrown his cane up on the stage in a dramatic gesture. At the close of the meeting, Kidd had to ask that his cane be returned to him so that he could make his way out of the auditorium. "[Grant] claimed to have healed him," fumed Mrs. Kidd, "but he lied."

While looking through Grant's various publications and noting the many mailing addresses he uses, I was struck by their variety and geographical spread. The "W. V. Grant, Jr. Evangelical Association" at a Cincinnati post-office box address sounds straightforward enough. Then there are mailing addresses for "W. V. Grant" in Dallas, Texas, one at a post-office box and the other on Grant Street. Grant's Bible course is offered from five different sources: The "21st Century Christ Ministry," "Kingsway Bible College," "TVD Bible College," "International Deliverance Churches," and "Faith Clinic Bible Correspondence Course." The television show is handled by QCI, QC Inc., QCM, and/or QC Advertising. Both "World Headquarters" and the "Eagle's Nest Cathedral" (formerly "Soul's Harbor Church") are located in Dallas on West Davis Street. But there is also the "Cathedral of Compassion" in Cincinnati, to say nothing of "Grant's Faith Clinic" and the "Faith Clinic School" back in Texas. Evidently deciding that consolidation of these several enterprises would be a wise move, the Reverend announced that as of January 1, 1986, he would be receiving mail (and offerings) at a single Dallas address—"The Eagle's Nest Cathedral."

The Reverend Grant pleads for donations to keep his show on television, basing his begging on that \$8 million dollars a year for air time. Between October 1985 and October 1986, he will spend \$375,700 (\$7,225 each week) on one television station alone, KHJ-TV in Los Angeles. But that is his single biggest market. It is also his most expensive by far, since some small UHF stations sell that same time-slot for as little as \$500. The Los Angeles bill represents about 10 percent of Grant's annual air-time budget. Actually, his total bill is just half of what he claims, or \$4 million.

Grant's program does not even show up in the top ten of the eighty-seven syndicated religious television programs in the United States. (Evangelist Rex Humbard, who appeared on television before some present incumbents were out of puberty, claims there are some 1,100 television preachers operating

today, though this estimate may be inflated and surely covers every 10-watt local station.) Robert Schuller with his "Hour of Power" commands the top position in that competition, reaching 1,123,200 households. Second place is occupied by Pat Robertson's "700 Club"—a powerful aid to his 1988 presidential ambitions. It is interesting to note that Robertson has of late abandoned his Grant-style healing pretensions, preferring to heal by telephone during his broadcasts. He now says he considers himself more a television journalist than an evangelist, and he compares himself to Walter Lippmann and William Buckley.

Robertson's White House aspirations may not be as fanciful as we may wish. Jerry Falwell and Jimmy Swaggart are both fond of alluding to their phone chats with President Reagan. Certainly, the Falwell organization's gross income of \$73 million could easily support any political campaign he might choose to launch. At a prayer breakfast during the 1984 Republican National Convention, Ronald Reagan declared that "religion and politics are necessarily related." Taking advantage of this assurance of access to the presidential ear, five television evangelists promptly presented themselves before the Platform Committee and claimed they represented thirty million television viewers. This was a bold ploy to make themselves important to the media and available for "inside" clues to Reagan's intentions. But, again, reality intrudes. The A. C. Nielsen rating service puts the viewer audience of all top ten television ministries at 9.3 million, a formidable figure but far less than these evangelists claimed. Facts and figures are invented and hyperbolized with little fear that anyone will discover the truth and care to correct them.

It is difficult to imagine how the Reverend Grant would explain the rather large discrepancies between his television coverage claims and the facts as recorded by Arbitron, the New York-based company that since 1949 has been the nation's leading broadcast audience measurement organization. Its latest in-depth survey of religious television programs shows that in yet another respect Grant has perhaps not given us the right figures. He claims to appear on "more than 300" television stations; Arbitron says he shows up on only 93. Grant says he now is seen in more homes than Oral Roberts; Arbitron says that Roberts appears in 1,046,000 households, while Grant is seen in only 198,000. And Roberts actually is shown on 201 television stations, against Grant's 93.

The American way means the freedom to pursue success in the free-enterprise system. There is nothing wrong with making money at a chosen profession. Most of us, but not all, are required to account for our income and pay appropriate taxes for our share of the financial burden of government. Religious organizations are not required to. Though the laws of the United States do not specify that churches are exempt from taxation, the First Amendment has been taken to mean just that. Many churches and religious organizations register with the Internal Revenue Service as nonprofit organizations, though they are not required to do so. Many evangelists, such as Billy Graham and the Wycliffe Bible Translators, have joined the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, a Protestant group that publishes the financial statements of its 350

members for public scrutiny. But W. V. Grant is not a member, nor is his corporation registered as a nonprofit organization. If it were, we would have some way of knowing just how much money goes into the wastebaskets carried about by his ushers at revival meetings and how much is deposited by the mailmen at all the post-office boxes and street addresses he uses for his mail-order business.

Grant's history is uncertain, at best. Consider what Grant, Sr., wrote about his son's early life and what the son recalls of his own youth. The father claimed that during one football game, W. V., Jr., "was knocked unconscious that night. He played for half the game while he was unconscious, scoring three touchdowns." Well, I hardly think that myth needs to be debunked. Suffice it to say that the school that young Grant attended was W. B. Adamson High School in Dallas, and those three touchdowns don't show up in its record books. Grant says that he "led the state of Texas in scoring as a halfback . . . and I had 77 full NCAA football scholarship offers." He scored an average of 22 points a game while at Adamson, he says. These stories are denied by Adamson's coach, James Batchelor, who now works with the Dallas Cowboys. He recalls Grant well. "He was not the kind that would get 77 scholarships," says Batchelor. The fact is that W. V. Grant did not receive inquiries from even one school, let alone 77! And no football player in Adamson's history has ever held the record Grant claims for himself. Batchelor says Grant's story is "just not true."

Grant claims to have attended the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) in the 1960s, and a certificate hanging on his office wall shows that he received a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1972 from "Midstates Bible College" in Des Moines, Iowa. UCLA has no record that Grant ever attended school. The Iowa Department of Public Instruction never heard of Midstates, nor did it show up in the 1972 phone book. It was never registered as a corporation in the state of Iowa, and neither the American Association of Bible Colleges nor the Association of Theological Schools has any record of its existence. Grant seems to be confused about details of his professional training and qualifications.

Just how much of Grant's disdain for truth creeps into his performance as a healer? We can begin to answer this question by examining the phenomena whereby afflicted persons jump out of wheelchairs and jog up and down the aisles at Grant's command.

Before we entered the auditorium at Grant's meeting in St. Louis, we encountered many invalids in wheelchairs. They included children in advanced states of cerebral palsy. Two chair-bound children, suffering from conditions I would not presume to diagnose, were strapped into their chairs. They made loud noises from time to time and thrashed about uncontrollably while their parents attempted to quiet them. Many older people were hunched over in their wheelchairs and appeared largely unaware of their surroundings. It was a depressing sight, and I wondered what Grant would do when confronted with these cases.

I went inside and sat up front with Joe Barnhart, who had

eagerly volunteered to be an usher in Grant's service. This enabled him to obtain much valuable information that would otherwise be unavailable. People in wheelchairs lined the front and the sides of the seating area. Several of these people were subsequently commanded by Grant to get up and walk. But not one of those I'd seen earlier was even approached for healing. They were all placed at the back of the auditorium, and when one of the noisy chair-bound children approached the stage, Grant turned to an aide and told him, out of the range of the microphone, to "get him to the back." Later the child cried out from the side of the auditorium, where he'd again been placed by his parents. Grant, busy with a miracle on the other side, was forced to acknowledge the shriek and said, "I'm gonna git to that in just a minute." But he never did.

Those people who did rise from wheelchairs and run in the aisles did so because they were quite capable of doing so, and always had been. One of them, an elderly black man we later interviewed, told Barnhart that "a pastor told him to sit" in the wheelchair they provided even though he could move about without it. We visited this man at his home and discovered that he lived in a room on the third floor of a walk-up. He managed the trip up and down those stairs several times a day!

The fact is this: Grant supplies the wheelchairs to appropriate subjects. It is no miracle at all that they get up and at his command wheel *him* about in those very chairs. Witnesses assume that the subjects arrived in the wheelchairs and will leave in them—unless treated to a miracle healing. That is just not so. Deliberate, cruel hoaxes are perpetrated to make miracles where there are none.

Following the meeting, I went to the elevator where the real wheelchair cases were preparing to leave in the same condition as when they arrived. I intended to approach the parents of the crippled child who had gotten near the front, in order to learn their reaction to what had occurred. At the last moment, seeing them in tears and comforting one another, their child still in the same pitiable state, I found I could not bring myself to intrude. They wheeled their son out into the night, sadly resigned to their situation, perhaps having enriched W. V. Grant beyond what they could afford in a last desperate hope of a miracle. Their agony was evident.

Supplying canes, walkers, and wheelchairs to those who don't need them is a common practice among healers. And, the believer might ask, is it the fault of the Reverend Grant if he doesn't know that the subject shouldn't be in that wheelchair? Perhaps God misinformed him on this, while correctly whispering the other "called out" information to his anointed minister? Surely, Grant could not correctly guess the subject's name every time unless God supplied him with it. Let's remember Kreskin and the other mentalists who perform just such wonders every night to entertain their audiences.

How does Kreskin do it? There are ways of obtaining information that are not apparent to the layman. We will discuss several of these techniques, and they are not in any way supernatural, merely clever. What's more important is the way that the information is delivered to the subject. The mentalist has various ways of doing this to maximize the dramatic effect.

"The A. C. Nielsen rating service puts the viewer audience of all top ten television ministries at 9.3 million, a formidable figure but far less than these evangelists claimed. Facts and figures are invented and hyperbolized with little fear that anyone will discover the truth and care to correct them."

Grant's act rarely rises above mediocrity in this respect.

Grant has adequate means of obtaining the information he needs—without the help of God or any of the "Nine Gifts of the Spirit" he is supposed to have been given as "One of the Anointed." But his revelation of that data is depressingly the same. For example, to give the name of the victim, here are the variations he uses: "I'm hearing, 'Jack,'" "I'm led to say, 'Jack,'" "I want to say, 'Jack,'" or "I'm seeing, 'Jack.'"

Whichever one of these he uses, it is then immediately followed with: "What's your name?"

And the subject answers as below. Or as an alternative, Grant asks: "Who is 'Jack'?" "What's 'Jack' mean to you?" "Why am I saying, 'Jack'?" or "Is there a 'Jack' here?"

To any of these questions, the victim may answer: "I'm 'Jack,'" "That's me," or "That's my name."

To make his dramatic disclosure of the subject's doctor's name, he uses it in a statement; for example: "When you go to see Dr. Meadows at the Grace Hospital, he's gonna tell you that your arth-uh-ritis is gone. Dr. Jesus has took over!" He then quickly follows up with, "What's the name of your doctor?" or, "Who's your doctor?" and obtains the correct reply.

With monotonous but necessary regularity, Grant asks one of these questions while "calling out" information: "Any of these folks [pointing to those within a five-foot circle around the subject] ask you any questions?" "Anyone ask you any questions since you've been here?" or "I ever ask you anything?"

The answer is almost inevitably no. But each of those questions is designed for a very specific situation. The first question is used when Grant himself has already approached the victim and personally asked for the information. Yes, unbelievable as it sounds, Grant's most frequent method of gaining his information is by simply asking the patient beforehand! Two hours before the meeting begins, he is very evident, walking about in his shirtsleeves among the few dozen early arrivals. These are mostly people who want to be healed and arrive so early to get seats on the aisle, where they can be touched by Grant. Remember J. Elmo Clark? He's the man who wanted his blind eye restored to sight. Clark had arrived at five o'clock when there were only a few persons in the auditorium. Grant had simply walked up to him, asked him his name, his doctor's name, and his ailment. Later, when Clark was "called out," he knew very well that Grant already had that information, but thought that Grant was *only checking the accuracy of what he remembered Elmo told him!* The rest of the audience were led to believe that God had revealed it all to Grant, since he also asked Clark, "Any of these folks ask you any questions?" and he gestured to those seated around Clark. The subject, of course, honestly answered no, because *none of those persons*



Photo by Bill Sharlette

Grant never approached this woman who attended one of his St. Louis meetings.

had asked him a thing!

Mr. Clark is also angry at Grant because his "healing" was a trick. Grant had covered Clark's *bad* eye and asked if he could see the people around him. Of course he could, and he affirmed that fact. But he never got a chance to explain until we interviewed him.

Mrs. Pearl Kidd said the same trick had been used on her husband, who had been touted by Grant in his publication as having been healed. Grant had approached Morris Kidd hours before the meeting and asked him his name, his doctor's name, and whether he could see a little. Kidd said that when he was "called out" he was asked if Grant or any other staff member had ever spoken to him. (If Grant actually used this question, he obviously erred, and should have phrased his inquiry as he did with Elmo Clark.) "My husband started to answer yes, but he [Grant] sort of cut him off. He would not give him a chance to answer." Remember, the Reverend Grant carries the microphone, which can be kept away from the subject or switched off completely if the answer is not the one desired. Remember, too, that Grant controls the editing of the videotape that is broadcast every week. Awkward moments never reach the air.

Of course the victim can either unintentionally give the information away in conversation with others in the line waiting to enter the auditorium or volunteer the information—with encouragement—while chatting with Grant's people before the meeting.

Some persons we interviewed claimed that they had given no information to Grant. The day after the meeting we attended, we spoke to relatives who had accompanied a man who suffered from several ailments and was barely able to walk. Though he'd been "called out," too, those relatives assured us that Grant had not spoken to him. He'd not written to Grant to say that he'd be there. It had been a last-minute

decision. But then they mentioned an important fact. They mentioned that the sick man had gone up to the front and engaged in a conversation with one of Grant's assistants. It turned out to be John Holland, who also ran the public-address system. The next day we planned to interview the subject, who had been declared healed by Grant with much applauding and cries of "Thank yuh Jesus!" but he was so ill that he could not speak or receive visitors.

There is another, much more subtle process that we observed in use at the St. Louis meeting. It involves those persons who could honestly testify that neither they nor any member of their party had told anything to anyone, from the moment they arrived at the meeting. I will discuss that a little further on, since the technique is quite sophisticated in concept and requires detailed description.

First, another question must be answered. Regardless of how Grant gets the information he uses, how does he remember it so well since he "calls out" as many as twenty persons in an evening? Let me leave this discussion for a moment and turn to the art of mnemonics. It is a simply fascinating art, about which today's leading practitioner, Harry Lorayne, has written a number of books. As perfected by Lorayne, mnemonics is a system of memorizing by association. Suppose you must remember the names of several persons to whom you are being introduced. Applying Lorayne's system, you would pick out some prominent feature of each persons appearance (facial details, dress, ornaments, marks, etc.) and associate that detail with either the sound or some characteristic of the name. Now suppose that you have met a man with a band-aid on his cheek. His name is Carter. You might imagine the band-aid to have a cartoon of Jimmy Carter—with lots of teeth, of course—drawn on it. The connection has been made. When you see that man with the band-aid an hour later, the Carter association will come to mind and you will "remember" his name. A woman might be wearing rhinestone glasses and be named Alexander. I would make the association by imagining a former feline pet of mine named Alexander wearing those glasses. Another person named Donahue wearing a loud checkered vest would lead me to associate that vest with television talk-show host Phil Donahue.

Now, without looking at the preceding paragraph, answer these questions:

1. What is the name of the man wearing the loud vest?
2. Who is the man with the band-aid?
3. How is the woman with the rhinestone glasses addressed?

If you never had a cat named Alexander, you might have missed the last question. But each person forms his or her own associations, of course. Weeks from now, if anyone asks you those same three questions, you will be able to answer correctly—because of mnemonics. Harry Lorayne, in his public performances, mixes with his audience before the show, meets each of them just once, and then later on correctly calls each and every one of them by name from the stage.

The system as taught by Lorayne also requires that the student learn a list of simple, basic objects that are associated with, say, the numbers from 1 to 25. Thus, a sailboat might stand for the number 5, while a dill pickle represents 15.

Equipped with this information, anyone is able to perform apparently prodigious feats of memory.

With mnemonics in mind, let us return to the discussion of Grant's most sophisticated methods. Some of those "called out" could honestly say that they hadn't told anyone their names and hadn't been engaged in conversation with anyone. We suspected that the information had been gained by means of "healing cards," which is a system still being used by some performers. In *The Truth About Faith Healers*, Grant, Sr., wrote about "healing cards" which were filled out by those seeking to be healed, giving permission to the evangelist to try his methods and use the name of the subject in publicity.

It seems evident that the present W. V. Grant has discovered a more sophisticated method that his father would have admired. At six o'clock, a full hour before the service was to begin, Grant mounted the stage and asked for the attention of those who had been sent "special offering envelopes" in the mail. These people were asked to come down a side aisle with their envelopes, in single file (this was emphasized several times), and to give their envelopes to Grant in person, one at a time. They were also carefully admonished not to say anything to the Reverend Grant because he might later "call them out" and wanted to be sure that no one suspected he had obtained any information from them at this encounter. Grant was careful to add that, even if they didn't have these special offering envelopes, they were free to join the line and give him any check or cash they wanted to contribute, and he would personally receive it. Obediently, a long line formed and moved slowly past Grant.

Barnhart and I remarked that Grant seemed strangely distracted as he accepted the envelopes and dropped them into the huge wastebasket at his side. His attitude seemed almost callous at a time when we thought he would have been exuding maximum charm in his personal contacts with these potential sources of income. But, to me, there was something familiar about his unfocused stare and seeming distraction.

There's an important observation to make here. In using mnemonics, you find that as you meet each person, you require a brief moment to establish an association. This almost invariably produces the "dissociated" expression that we observed on Grant's face as he took each envelope. And he glanced at the front of each envelope, then looked directly into the face of each donor.

Now we discovered that there is a section on the front of each envelope where the name of the donor can be written. Persons who have colored envelopes with a dove drawn on the front are those who have previously written to Grant. In return they have received a computer-printed form letter reminding them that Grant will be in their area for a Miracle Crusade, and they are told that if they "have any prayer requests or needs you may have in your life" they are to write them down and send them along with their \$20 donation in "the enclosed envelope." They are instructed: "Hand it to me personally when I call for it at the Auditorium. If you have any special requests enclose them as well."

The Reverend Grant reads the name of the donor on the front of the envelope and associates the person's face with the

name as the envelope is handed to him. He can then retire backstage, as he did at the St. Louis and Fort Lauderdale meetings we attended, to open the envelopes and establish a connection with the data contained inside. And, of course, since most checks bear the name and address of the account holder, reference to a telephone book would supply further information that could be "called out" during the service to follow, as if it came from on high.

An unorganized crowd of persons pressing around Grant to present their envelopes would interfere with this association and memorization process. For this reason, he specifies that they stay in single file. This, and the insistence both in his letter and in his statement at the meeting that these envelopes must be presented *in person* by those who received them, provide ample evidence that this is one of Grant's methods of obtaining "called out" data. Remember too, that he says such things as, "I want to say, 'Jack' " or "Who is 'Jack.'" In this way, he avoids blunders resulting from another person having brought the envelope to him, the afflicted having been unable to do so.

At the Fort Lauderdale meeting, we were able to discover two more of Grant's methods for obtaining information. There, he personally collected one batch of "special" envelopes from those who stood in line. He made no move to retreat backstage to memorize the new data. Instead, four-by-five-inch "crib sheets" were prepared backstage by his coworkers and taken to him on stage. During pauses for hymns, Grant studied these sheets, folded and placed them in his jacket pocket, and then proceeded to call out a new batch of subjects.

Much to my surprise, one of my team members noticed one of Grant's associates standing at the back of the auditorium using hand signals and pointing to various parts of his body to indicate where the subject was afflicted. The associate had his own crib sheet and was there to jog Grant's memory if his mnemonics began to fade.

I wanted to get hold of the crib-sheets Grant carried around in his pocket. I stood close up to the edge of the stage as he worked at memorizing one of them. When the meeting broke up, I approached Chuck Saje, one of my colleagues, and suggested that we put a watch on the trash that was thrown out by the Grant crew each night. The first night yielded nothing. The two large dumpsters beside the Grant truck remained empty except for a few food wrappers. The second and third nights were the same, and even the food wrappers were gone by Saturday, when the Grant caravan departed. I felt that I should probably abandon this surveillance, but made one more forage on Sunday. *Eureka!* Two plastic trash bags had appeared atop some tree cuttings and, to the amusement of several early-morning joggers, I made off with them. It was a bonanza.

Chuck and I searched among the coffee grounds, cigarette butts, and french fries, and the first thing we came up with was a note from Shirley Grant to her husband setting up the time and place that they would go to dinner. We knew then that we were behind the scenes of the Grant show, and indeed we were. A total of ninety-seven letters and envelopes, all torn in half, showed up next. One envelope held a letter from a Mary Birchman, a subject who had been "healed" of colon cancer and a

W. V. Grant's "Leg-stretching Trick"

During many revival meetings, the Reverend Grant will announce that a subject has "a short leg" that needs to be adjusted. He brings the person on stage and seats him on a chair facing the back of the stage but slightly turned to the audience. He lifts both legs of the subject so they are parallel to the floor. At this point, the spectators see that one leg (the one nearest to them) appears shorter by about two inches, judged by the relative positions of the heels of the shoes or boots. After very weighty incantations, which Grant utters while supporting both of the subject's feet on one hand, the "short" leg seems to lengthen to match the other.

The stunt is similar to one that is a carnival mainstay: "The Man Who Grows." In this act, a man is introduced who seems to fit his clothes well enough. He then goes into a "trance" and appears to grow by seven or eight inches, by which time his sleeves are far too short and the bottoms of his pants are halfway to his knees. The gimmick is simple: The man is dressed in a too-small suit and only has to "scrunch down" while in a standing position to make it appear to fit. As he straightens up and swells out his chest, the bad fit becomes apparent. It is a striking illusion, often enhanced by popping a belt-buckle and shirt

buttons.

Grant's trick is even simpler. His subject must wear loose shoes; cowboy boots are far better. As the subject sits, Grant merely places his hand beneath the subject's feet and twists his hand to pull one shoe slightly off the foot (the farther one) and to press the other tightly against the sole (the nearer one). By reversing the twist, the farther shoe is pushed in against the sole and the two shoes—as well as the two feet—are now seen to be the same length.

But there is a second gimmick at work. As can be seen in the photos, the illusion also depends upon the fact that Grant swings the two legs toward the stage so that they are truly at right angles from the audience, while the chair (and the man's body) remains slightly turned toward the audience. This displaces the feet relative to one another, and they do not meet; the legs thus seem to be of differing lengths. To cause the "growth" of the nearer leg, Grant simultaneously presses the loose shoe into place and swings the legs into line with the man's body.

The caption for the photographs below, which were taken from Grant's *New Day* magazine, reads: "Two before-and-after photos of Rev. Grant praying for a precious Monroe man's

short leg. The photo at left shows it to be approximately three inches short. The photo at the right shows how it has grown out normal length. P.T.L.!" The abbreviation means "Praise the Lord!"

Measurements of these photographs prove that these two methods are used to produce the illusion of the growing leg. The pictures also show how a cowboy boot is an advantage to the trick. The very fit of such a boot allows it to be pulled away from the foot for some considerable distance without falling off. And, please note that in these photographs, if the nearer leg in the right-hand photograph actually grew longer, the man's trousers grew even more, proportionately. There is less boot showing on the lengthened leg than there was before the miracle.

Grant's subjects may get the notion that one leg may be shorter than the other from their chiropractors, who frequently tell them that this condition exists and prescribe a custom-made "lift" for one shoe. In my examinations of chiropractic claims, I've had several such devices prescribed, some for one shoe, some for the other.

Let's give a hand to Grant for a fine performance!—James Randi



swollen leg by Grant at the first meeting. He had "called out" her name. Mary was not healed, and her letter, given in person to Grant, contained every detail he had "revealed" at the meeting. A score more letters were of the same nature, giving intimate details that Grant had been "divinely inspired" to announce.

But the best prize of all was one of the crib-sheets. Recall that Grant had met certain people in selected line-ups as they gave him their beige envelopes containing twenty dollars and a letter. He had associated their faces with their first names (on the envelope). He had then had a dozen or so envelopes at a time taken backstage and, in return, received 4-by-6-inch data-sheets from an assistant. He had studied the sheets and added the new data to his memory, then placed the sheets in his pocket. The crib-sheet we saw read, "Anthony—deaf in both ears, and bladder and tumors. Connie—pain in left eye and left jaw, thyroid and arthritis. Digestive problems: Bernadette—psoriasis, arthritis. Michael—deaf in left ear. Syl—high blood pressure."

The Reverend Grant, both in his personal ministry and in his television appearances, had encouraged his subjects to write letters expressing their prayer needs. "I will take each letter and anoint it with this holy oil from Israel, and I will pray over your letters back in my church in Dallas," Grant had promised. But the most callous fact we uncovered was that some letters, some several pages long and filled with heart-rending pleas for the minister's prayers and the intercession of God, had been torn up, crumbled, and tossed into the garbage. They never even reached Grant's hands. Only by piecing together the scraps of the congregation's hopes, bit by bit, were we able to finally see the true attitude of this pastor toward his flock.

Grant says in no uncertain terms that it is as a result of his anointed status that he possesses the Gifts of the Spirit and that he is thus able to call out members of his audience. Accompanied by his down-home bad English and country-boy usage (he refers to the land of "Iz-rull," "paralyzation of the limbs," and the disease "arth-uh-ritis") his magic act is quite effective in convincing many people that they are witnessing miracles. Grant even has the gall to tell them—in several different ways—that he is not doing an "ESP act" or a "magic show." He attributes it all to divine gifts.

"I take dominion over every force of sin! I take dominion over every force of every disease!" he shrieks. Then he quickly adds, "Brothers and sisters, I couldn't heal a fly with a headache—it's Doctor Jesus who heals!" He follows up with an observation based upon a scriptural passage: "There are folks here who will try to tell me that they have 'heart trouble'! Don't they know that's *impossible*? The scriptures tell us that's impossible! Jesus tells us that's impossible! How many know that's impossible? Why? 'Cause Jesus said, and these are his words, 'Let not your heart be troubled'! There! Jesus' own words! You *can't* have 'heart trouble'!"

As a magician, I recognize the phrasing in Grant's act. Rather than simply reciting or directly declaring the data he has on each person, he couches his information carefully so that if it is wrong or applied incorrectly it will not really miss the mark. Knowing a name listed in a telephone directory will



W. V. Grant

give him a street number. But it may be a former address, or belong to another person. He wisely chooses to create a vignette: "You're coming out of a door. I want to say a number ending in a '9.' [The person begins nodding affirmatively.] Is it '2409'?" And it is. He has made a hit. If there is no recognition, however, he can turn the small scene into the emergence of a former address, of a doctor's office, or any one of dozens of other scenarios. Of course, these comments are all peppered with frequent questions, such as, "Any way I could know all this?" and "Have you told anybody here . . .?"

W. V. Grant is, to put it bluntly, doing a magic act disguised as religious miracles. Using a mixture of very simple and rather sophisticated techniques learned from observing evangelists like David Paul, David Epley, and others, going back to William Branham, Grant performs his mind-reading tricks in order to prepare his victims to accept the subsequent demonstration of faith-healing. To a large extent, his audience is already "primed" to accept him, by his reputation, his wide exposure on television, and an already established tradition of charismatic healers, with their "slaying of the spirit," "laying on of hands," and other techniques with which many of the believers are familiar. They lose themselves in the inane crying out of phrases like "Praise the Lord!" and endless repetitions of "Amen!" and suspend their thinking processes in hopes that blind faith will win them a place in Heaven.

It is incredible what long-time believers will accept from evangelists. They have been so conditioned to ignore paradoxes and to excuse blatant errors of fact presented to them by the preachers that they actually take pride in their ability to believe in spite of contrary evidence. Anyone who has never attended a revival meeting cannot imagine the assault on reason and common sense to which the audience is subjected. In St. Louis, the Reverend Grant asserted that he only asks for money once a month, knowing that his listeners cannot check on the last

“W. V. Grant is, to put it bluntly, doing a magic act disguised as religious miracles.”

stop he's made, nor on the next. He promised just one money appeal during this service but asked eleven times for donations. No one objected or even noticed, it seemed.

Evangelists abuse truth at every opportunity. But surely their victims have doubts? Surely those who know that the Reverend Grant *asked* them their names in person are not going to ignore that fact and continue to believe in his powers? Why don't people say something when they are aware of the farce being played out? These questions are not easily answered.

There are doubts aplenty. But Grant and his colleagues carefully warn their followers that Satan will try to implant doubts in their heads and that they must resist the temptation to listen. Satan will even tempt the believers to withhold that twenty-dollar bill from Grant's offering basket. Most manage to resist that temptation.

Those who are aware of Grant's information-gathering techniques may decide—as did Elmo Clark—that what happened to them was an exception. And, like Mr. Kidd, they get little opportunity to express their doubts and, if they do, they can be cut off and subsequently misquoted.

Where is the forum for those who want to complain? There is none. Any attempt to take questionable evangelistic healers to court has failed because of two major factors: (1) The guilty have simply too much money behind them and too large and powerful an organization to be in danger of prosecution. (2) The First Amendment has legislators so completely cowed that they treat such an action as the very hot potato it is. Taking an evangelist to court could be political suicide.

There is no doubt that performers like Grant are culpable. If he were pretending to heal headaches, backaches, depression, or other psychosomatic ailments, he could to a considerable extent escape condemnation for interfering with the well-being of his victims. But he goes all the way, claiming to treat such problems as cancer, bacterial infections, physical imperfections, bone fractures, organic defects, circulatory disease, and internal disorders simply by praying them away. Grant is literally practicing medicine without any qualifications whatsoever—an infraction that cannot be allowed under law and a process that can lead to the injury and death of his victims.

There are other serious reasons to assign culpability to Grant. For example, during his appeals for money, he promises that donations will be returned to the giver many times over, thus making a financial offering to his audience. Could anyone other than a self-appointed minister of religion make such a presentation without fear of prosecution?

In an interview with one devoted couple, firm believers in the television evangelists, who had even equipped themselves with a satellite dish and a video recorder so that they would not miss even one gospel message or miracle, an interviewer for a television station in Florida discovered their strange reasoning concerning television preachers. Asked what their reaction would be if the preachers were proven to be crooks, the woman smiled and explained that that would be quite all

right with her. “You see, it's our job just to send them the money they need to carry on the good work. If any of them is dishonest, God will take care of that in the bye-and-bye!” Again, formula wins out over good thinking.

It is almost beyond belief what W. V. Grant teaches in his Kingsway Bible College correspondence course. Although a considerable portion of Grant's income is derived from black Americans, in *Men in the Flying Saucers Identified*—one of his textbooks—he labels as “communist doctrine” that the “white girls [should] marry the negro boys, or mate with them without marrying.” And to point up the import of his observation, he asks us, “You don't take it serious [*sic*]?” Evidently Grant takes all this “serious,” because he says in this book that the information came to him “through prophetic utterance and under the anointing of God.” He had a revelation in 1953 that demons live “near the moon” and that we will only reach the moon “when Jesus comes.”

Grant would also have his students believe that a “mysterious red tide” has appeared in the Pacific Ocean and Niagara Falls and that “the scientists could not tell it from blood.” (This may be a far-fetched reference to the “Red Tide” phenomenon seen yearly off the coast of Peru, but *not* at Niagara Falls. It is a well-understood seasonal growth of algae.)

In his textbook *Power to Defeat Demons*, W. V. Grant says that “a demon is assigned to each country to try to control the ruler of that country.” He also claims that there is good reason for the backward state of tropical countries: Since demons are “not affected by weather . . . there are more demon possessed people near the equator than in other parts of the world.” That's the least of it, continues Grant. “The devil will make people dress in shorts or bathing suits, or join the nudist [*sic*] camps.” Even the demon-casting-out business itself is fraught with peril: “I started to cast a devil out of a lady,” he tells his students. “That devil screamed for its companion nearby. Then I discovered there were two spirit mediums in the audience.” Later, he asked a demon who it was, and it replied, “I am a Christian Science practitioner . . . I am mean. I'll hurt you.”

In another fanciful tirade, Grant teaches his correspondence students that “from two to five thousand Christians are being put to death each day in China alone. The goal is 100,000,000; Christians and others. There are 15,000,000 in America who are on record to go the same way. They are marked.” In this way students are brought to understand world politics and the danger of un-Christian philosophies. A booklet titled *Demons at the Doorstep, II* even claims that certain chemists grind up newborn babies to use in the manufacture of cosmetics for painted women to buy. The Reverend Grant has a dire warning for his colleagues—detractors who might doubt his qualifications—in his text *Signs, Wonders, Miracles* that he has “seen several ministers the past few years criticize miracles, signs and wonders. They are now in their graves. They have gone down with heart trouble, cancers, and operations of various sorts.”

One of his texts, *A Mark in the Forehead*, gives further details on the tribulations of Christians in communist countries:

"There have been 21,000,000 people in Russia and China . . . who have had their heads cut off, or buried alive!" And he delves into astronomy with this statement: "The scientists say that something happens to the stars every two thousand years. Two planets passed each other, for the first time since just before Noah's flood. Six of the eight planets lined up in the west like they were on a parade. This had not happened since just before the birth of Christ." To point out the inanity of these statements would be to insult the intelligence of a 12-year-old.

But the big surprise of this particular text—only one of the sixty sold by Grant for his correspondence course—is the answer to a burning question concerning those who have "the seal of God in their foreheads." It is a question Grant poses on the cover, and he promises that the answer will be inside. He will give us, he says, the actual "names and addresses of those who have it now!" Who has the blessed mark? "Millions," says the Reverend Grant, "I have it: I was there the night that I received it; I should know. My wife and boy have it." And the addresses? "My address is Box 353 in Dallas, Texas. My wife and boy receive their mail at the same place. . . ." Readers are told that if they are without this mark at the Coming, they are doomed to "battle over 200,000,000 demons!" But, if they do not have this required mark, there is still a small chance for them: "There may be a few saved people who will have their heads cut off and be saved. . . ." (Grant is very fond of head-chopping as a punishment.)

Surely this cannot be legitimate college-degree material? But the advertisements for the Kingsway Bible College aver that it is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Specialized Colleges and the American Association of Specialized Colleges and that students will receive a D.D. degree upon having read the texts and answered the true/false questions. I asked Joseph Barnhart to check this out with his sources in Texas, where Grant has his headquarters. He consulted David Kelly at the Coordinating Board of the State of Texas, in Austin, who said he had never heard of these organizations, nor of W. V. Grant. He referred Barnhart to the Accredited Institutions of Post-Secondary Education and the Higher Education Directory (published by the Department of Education), two U.S. reference books that would list legitimate, recognized institutions able to award degrees. No trace of any of Grant's groups showed up there. Kelly reported: "There is no TVD College or Kingsway Bible College authorized to award a degree, including an honorary doctor's degree, or to use the term *college* in its title within the state of Texas."

The correspondence course is mailed out from International Deliverance Churches, which claims to be "a non-profit corporation in Texas recognized by the Federal Government, to promote education." The blurb accompanying Grant's course says "We are qualified to give ordination." But *any* church, of any kind or scope, can give ordination to anyone it wants, for any reason.

Examination of the Bible course Grant sells shows that it is useless as a source of knowledge. It appears to have been assembled by an illiterate and consists of superstitious nonsense. It is a total misrepresentation, sold to innocent persons who

"Grant is literally practicing medicine without any qualifications whatsoever—an infraction that cannot be allowed under law and a process that can lead to the injury and death of his victims."

receive several pounds of printed paper accompanied by pleas for donations and little else for their investment.

Can the Reverend W. V. Grant practice medicine, guarantee financial success, promise to perform miracles, pretend to educate and give out college degrees—for a price—without proper qualifications to do so, without any sort of permit, training, or license? Can he do all that and also publish and preach lies that promote fear, hate, superstition, and bigotry to the American people, in the absolute certainty that no one has the power to stop him? The answer is yes. He knows that no matter what emotional, physical, or financial damage he does to any number of people, he will not be prosecuted or even stopped.

Grant's immunity—and the immunity of other evangelists—seems assured. In 1979, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was pressured into investigating the "Praise the Lord" (PTL) television evangelism operation run by Jim Bakker. The Commission spent three years investigating, then decided in a four-to-three vote to take "no action" on the matter. Its findings were turned over to the U.S. Department of Justice, and that body took three months to decide to drop it as well. Note: Bakker was not vindicated, as he now claims. He was simply not prosecuted. Had either the FCC or the Department of Justice found insufficient evidence that he was guilty of misdirecting donated funds to the designated charity, as was charged, they would have so declared.

Helen O'Rourke, director of the U.S. Council of Better Business Groups, was asked about the possibility that evangelists might be seriously investigated by that body. "I can't even believe they will ever touch religious organizations," she replied. "It's too political." Paul Tuz, director of the Toronto Better Business Bureau in Canada, says that his desk is crossed daily by letters from victims of television evangelists and healers. He is more optimistic than Mrs. O'Rourke that something can be done, but still concludes that it is a matter of the "let the buyer beware."

A 1984 U.S. Supreme Court ruling threw out all limitations on the amounts a charity—and that includes operations like Grant's—can spend on administrative costs. Since Grant is not required to make any financial disclosure and does not belong to the responsible groups who voluntarily make such statements, he is free to do what he wants with millions of yearly income. The Grant publication *New Day* lists Kenya, Haiti, Mexico, and Nigeria as countries to which Grant donates money from his ministry. Checks of as much as \$1,000 are mentioned. And such urgent matters as the distribution of "over 1000 King James Version Bibles and good Christian books" are reported to have been distributed in the Nigerian prison system. One can only hope that those books contain better educational material than the Grant Bible course. •

A Medical Anthropologist's View of American Shamans

Philip Singer

The investigation of W. V. Grant and other "faith-healers" by the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion raises important issues for American society and for American medicine.

1. From an anthropological viewpoint, faith-healing and conjuring tricks are part of the historical American cultural repertoire. Our concern, however, as scientists, is whether this particular combination of faith-healing and conjuring is hurting the health of the patients-devotees involved in these acts of faith.

The issue for our society is whether we wish to prosecute fraud in order to protect the health of the devotees even though this quackery-fraud is protected by the Constitution's First Amendment. In our country, we have assigned the regulation of health fraud to the Food and Drug Administration. Under its rules, health fraud must directly involve regulated products like drugs and foods. Since these are not used in faith-healing, the FDA has no authority in this area.

2. As a concerned American citizen, and as a medical anthropologist, I view what is going on at the faith-healing rallies as examples of traditional superstitious healing. I would like, as an anthropologist, to see the "natives" move toward a more rational health-seeking behavior. However, given the strength of religious belief in our culture, this is not a likely prospect. Nevertheless, just as anthropologists have worked in third-world countries to change people's beliefs about their religion that are harmful to their health, we must make a conscious effort to do the same in our culture.

3. In a sense, medical anthropologists who try to change behavior for better health-care have always been "consumer

advocates." We have always empathized with the native being taken advantage of, no matter who the "exploiter" is. The exploiter could be the shaman, the Western-trained physician charging exorbitant fees, the Ministry of Health importing harmful drugs like Depoprovera, or the government preferring to build hospitals in cities rather than in rural areas. The issue for anthropologists in our own culture is whether we are prepared to be consumer advocates despite the patient-devotee and his belief system, the cultural concept of separation of church and state, and the legalisms that have grown up around this concept.

4. Medical anthropologists have always had a love affair with traditional "alternative" healers in third-world countries. We have seen them as delivering some health services to the people most in need but least served by Western-trained physicians. We have also been reluctant to criticize any of these traditional healers because of our cultural holistic approach, which holds that each member of society has a role to play. We have viewed alternative healers like Grant as having value because they provide the patient with a sense of gaining control over their own bodies.

The issue here is whether American medical anthropologists are prepared to say that some alternative healers are frauds and should not be allowed to practice. I do not know any anthropologist in this country who is not in favor of punishing physicians when it is shown that they have engaged in malpractice. We should not be loath to condemn alternative healers if it is shown that they are quacks.

5. Regardless of the religious convictions of those who attend Grant's revivals (he makes a point of showing that persons of all religions come to him), they all receive *exculpation* from their illnesses. This is exculpation through Jesus. Whether or not they have been healed during the revival is not nearly as important as having been told that Jesus loves them and that sooner or later they will be healed, because *their illness is not their fault*. Satan, they are told, is the etiology of all disease, and "Doctor Jesus" will heal them, if not in this world, then in the next.

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Social behavior, not just sickness, is involved here. The question becomes one of determining the meaning of the illness for the person involved, which here is that Jesus loves the patient, and if he hadn't gone to the revival he would be poorer in spirit. Can we try to substitute the judgment of the conjurer, the physician, and the anthropologist for that of the healer and the patient? I believe that in *our culture*, with its emphasis on science and the exposure of fraud and trickery, we can and, indeed, must. For in our culture, sleight of hand and magic tricks, when they are not entertainment, are fraud and are not acceptable.

The paradox that emerges in the popularity of faith-healing today is that never before in America has there been greater demystification and deprofessionalization of medical knowledge and medical personnel and never before has there been greater popular access to all kinds of medical knowledge; yet, at the same time, because of the chronic, degenerative, terminal nature of some diseases today, there is a greater reliance on, and acceptance of, all forms of quackery and conjuring. The healer's self-proclaimed "gift of grace" is thought by believers to be the most esoteric, mystical "knowledge," and apparently no amount of rationalism can counter it.

Social scientists must come squarely to grips with the implications of this situation: that so-called modern Western man is no more rational, no more logical, than his nonliterate, technologically primitive ancestors who engage in magical "participation mystique." Nevertheless, *our culture* maintains that rationalism is superior to irrationalism and that scientifically verifiable truth is to be preferred over varieties of mystical experience. Therefore, in keeping with the dominant values of our culture, social scientists cannot sacrifice their concern for the truth in order to culturally exculpate irrational behavior. For them to insist upon the integrity of cultural context in this case is to prostitute science for one aspect of cultural expediency. I think a justifiable parallel can be drawn here with Lysenkoism and the communist ideological emphasis upon the inheritance of acquired characteristics. This took place within the cultural context of dominant Soviet communist ideology, but it did not make it any more truthful. It is clear that, from the point of view of health, Grant and other "healers" cannot be integrated into the medical system.

6. The concept of the separation of church and state has led the medical establishment, as well as most of the social scientific establishment, to disregard religious practices that impinge upon health. Yet both the physician and the healing evangelist hold powerful positions in our society. Both deal with frightened, anxious sick people who are ready to turn their problems over to authority figures. Both the medical establishment and preachers like Grant are treating patients suffering from organic problems of cancer, diabetes, kidney dysfunction, and heart trouble. But there is apparently a widespread perception among sick people that the physicians' intervention through drugs, surgery, radiation, and hospitalization has not been successful in restoring their patients to health. Indeed, the eminent physician-scientist John Powles has pointed out that in the case of heart attack "there is no convincing evidence that [intensive coronary care units] secure any more favorable outcomes than simple treatment at home." For the

"As a concerned American citizen, and as a medical anthropologist, I view what is going on at the faith-healing rallies as examples of traditional superstitious healing. I would like, as an anthropologist, to see the 'natives' move toward a more rational health-seeking behavior."

patient-devotees who go to faith-healers, faith in Jesus and His spokesperson constitutes home treatment. Anthropological studies have repeatedly proven that, even when people are conclusively shown that their shaman-priest-healer is engaging in sleight-of-hand tricks, they still do not abandon their belief-system. Radiation, drugs, surgery, etc., don't always work either, they argue. What Grant and the others do responds to their needs. By radically shifting emphasis away from acceptance of things as they are to "miracles" of curative change, the faith-healers put themselves in a no-lose situation. If you are sick and do not get cured, you are one of God's chosen; if you get better, you are the recipient of God's miracle. The medical and social scientist should conduct research to see if in fact the healers do significantly affect the course of organic disease.

7. Unlike societies that accord high prestige to those claiming "gifts of the spirit," our society generally does not. As has been observed by the psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, if you talk and pray to God, you are religious; if God talks to you, you are crazy. That is true *except* for healing evangelists. Why have physicians and psychiatrists exempted faith-healers from their medical judgment of mental illness or sociopathy?

From an anthropological viewpoint, what is unique about Western faith-healers like W. V. Grant is that they do not overtly engage in any of the cross-cultural techniques that are said to develop the powers that go with the "gifts of grace." Such activities as fasting, trance induction, repetitive motor activities, chanting, dancing, and the use of drugs to alter consciousness are traditionally employed to enable the shaman to become more receptive to the "spirits." Grant does, however, occasionally do a little up-and-down hop.

Should the scientist, the conjurer, or the anthropologist pass judgment on whether or not the faith-healer is being spoken to by Jesus, or is it for the devotees to make that judgment? I believe that in our culture, with its emphasis on mental health and reality, we have that responsibility. It is also for that reason that we can talk about Grant's tricks of mentalism and not simply accept his cultural role. Trickery is not consonant with the values of our culture.

8. Margaret Mead once described the occult, which manifests itself in the various phenomena of "psi," as "forms of wisdom." Numerous anthropologists who have returned from exotic, third-world locations have indicated a belief in psi events, including miraculous cures, precognition, human-to-animal transformations, communication with the dead, materializations, poltergeists, psychokinetics, weather-making, and so on. Does this mean that anthropologists should be accompanied in the field by conjurers? Does the presence of the conjurer (in

Grant's "Miracles": A Follow-up

The results of my investigation into eight cases of reported healing by W. V. Grant follow. They demonstrate the charade that is being perpetrated by Grant. The issue here is what the major religions are willing to do to combat it. It would seem that there is a legal basis for action, but because faith-healers have claimed protection through constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion, nothing has been done so far.

In Michigan anyone who wants to start a religion can file papers, pay \$20.00, and receive a certificate of incorporation. Indeed, in 1982 eight reporters from the *Detroit News* founded the "Church of the Ultimate Reality," which had the stated purpose of seeking "seams in reality." It seems to me that in the act of incorporating, the church, or creed, or cult lays itself open to investigation for questionable practices. For example, in May 1982, the New York-based Life Science Church was found guilty of fraudulent and deceptive practices for promising tax-exempt status to people who paid to become ministers. "Healing" forty-nine people of diabetes (Case 7) would certainly seem to qualify as a questionable practice intended to get money from those "healed."

Except for Case 5, the patients described below were seen by Grant during an appearance at Cobo Hall in Detroit, Michigan, in July 1982. The patient in Case 5 appeared on a television program with Grant in Detroit in the same month.

Case 1

Patient: Ms. Mattie Bowles, about 45 years old, of Detroit, Michigan.

Grant's Diagnosis: "You've been five years in that wheelchair. God is going to uncripple you. God says not only can you walk, but you can shove me in this wheelchair." Grant "calls" her doctor's name and has patient acknowledge that, since she has been in the hall, neither he nor any member of his group has spoken to her.

Comment: Ms. Bowles came to the meeting with a male companion. While she was being "healed," I spoke with him. He told me, "She spoke with Grant the other night at another service." Ms. Bowles's physician, Dr. Parnicky of Hooper Hospital, told me that she is not wheelchair-bound, that she has neurodermatitis, and that she is being effectively treated with the drug Naprosyn. When I spoke with Ms. Bowles, she told me that she feels more comfortable being in the chair because of her weight, that she walks around her house, and that she had written a note to Grant before her healing. She said: "Reverend Grant healed the arthritis in my leg, but not in my hand."

Case 2

Patient: Ms. Betsy Patterson, about 70 years old, of Dearborn, Michigan.

Grant's Diagnosis: Grant "called her out," gave her name and said that she had Parkinson's disease. He touched her and said that "Doctor Jesus" had healed her and wouldn't her doctor, who he named, "be surprised."

Comment: I asked her sister, who accompanied her, how Grant knew her name, her doctor's name, and her illness. She said: "We've been here before" and then refused to say any-

thing more. Her physician, Dr. Rooker, who I contacted at Ford Hospital in Dearborn, commented: "Last time I saw her a few months ago things were relatively stable. The condition is slowly but continuously progressive."

Case 3

Patient: Robert Miller and his wife, Susan, both in their 40s, of Chelsea, Michigan.

Comment: Mr. Miller was acting as an usher at the rally when I spoke to him. He told me that he had not only been given a "new stomach" by the Reverend Grant, but that another healer, the Reverend Angley of Akron, Ohio, had given him a "new heart and twelve other miracles." He gave me the name of his physician at the Chelsea Medical Center and explained that "all the time I was going to my doctor, I was receiving these healings. But the symptoms were always there every time I went to see the doctor." When I contacted his physician, Dr. Garr, who was familiar with the "miracles," I was told: "I'm not thrilled with these kinds of healings. For psychosomatics its great. However, it creates guilt feelings if they don't get cured."

Susan Miller had this to say: "I was anemic for several years. Reverend Grant 'called' me and told me all about my condition. He also said I had a dark spot on my left side, on the ovarian section. He said I had very bad monthlies, which was true. He said God was removing that and that I would fall out in the Spirit. And when I was on the floor I would get a blood transfusion from the Lord. He laid his hands on me. I could feel blood gushing down on me from the

the field or at Grant's rally) induce culturally misplaced concreteness in the face of a mythic performance? What would a magician have to contribute to an understanding of the Catholic Mass, where the flesh and blood of Jesus becomes real through partaking of the wafer and the wine?

Does the conjurer's role and perspective mask anti-intellectualism, or does it *promote* intellectualism, in terms of the anthropological concerns of cultural behavior? All of these questions are undoubtedly relevant for the anthropologist studying a culture *other than his own*. However, obviously in

Grant's case we are not applying conceptual abstractions as outsiders looking in. *We are the natives in our culture*. We reflect Western scientific thought, and these are Judeo-Christian Western rituals we are concerned with. We are involved in our culture, both objectively and subjectively, and we have that right. We are not, in this case, distorting the native's perspectives by imposing our outsider categories upon them.

The issue for our culture is whether the individual has the right to choose his own therapy, under the guise of religion, even when it is shown to be worthless and, indeed, even harm-

top of my head to the tip of my toes. This happened four times. I have felt terrific ever since and my monthlies are normal now. I feel the Lord reveals these things to Reverend Grant. He has the gift of calling out your Social Security number, your doctor, and other things."

I contacted Mrs. Miller's family physician, Dr. Shirley McCormick, who would not give out any information without a release from Mrs. Miller. However, she offered information about another person "healed" by Grant, a woman with diabetes and high blood pressure. After her "healing" she stopped her medication and suffered cardiac arrest and a diabetic crisis. Dr. McCormick feels "healings" are dangerous.

Case 4

Patient: Michael Majernik, featured in Grant's newsletter, *Dawn of a New Day*, Summer 1982. Patient is 69 years old, of Warren, Michigan. The caption under his photo in the newsletter reads: "Healed of Cancer—Gained 90 lbs. Last year at Easter time, Rev. Grant called my name, Michael. It shocked me. He proceeded to tell me all about my cancer. I had lost down to 100 pounds. My cancer is now gone. I am up to 189 pounds. My doctor wants me to lose weight."

Comment: The patient's physician, Dr. Kenneth Nutton, told me that Mr. Majernik did have throat cancer, had undergone surgery, and had received radiation treatments and that since March 1981 there has been no further evidence of cancer. The physician's notes indicate that Majernik "was cured by surgery left palate, January 1981." This was approximately three months before Grant "healed" him.

In an interview with the patient's wife, she told me that she went to see

her husband's physician and told him that he had been healed by the Reverend Grant. She said he "shrugged and laughed and said there's no cancer."

Case 5

Patient: Thelma Eccles and her daughter.

Grant's Diagnosis: "Thelma has bad kidneys. Her daughter, Rosemary, will be healed of sickle-cell disease by August 2."

Comment: Mrs. Eccles's physician, Dr. Gary Slick of Detroit Osteopathic Hospital, told me that there has been no change in Thelma Eccles's diabetes. He did not know her daughter."

Case 6

Patient: Mary Louise Lord, in her 50s, of Detroit.

Grant's Diagnosis: "Throat cancer."

Comment: One of the students in my medical anthropology class interviewed the patient. The student reported: "None of the three doctors named by Grant and the woman in the interview could be located. The woman reports that the doctors did not diagnose her as having throat cancer. However, she knows that she has throat cancer because she has a terrible taste in her mouth, which Reverend Grant commented on. She also says that she knows she has throat cancer because her symptoms match those of a friend's niece who had been diagnosed as having throat cancer and was receiving treatment. She said she knows the doctors are lying to her when they say she has no throat cancer, but she doesn't know why."

Case 7

Patients: Forty-nine people with diabetes.

Comment: The Reverend Grant announced from the stage: "There are 49 people here who have some type of sugar diabetes. God is going to heal you of it right now." He asked those with "sugar" to stand up and then began to count, "two, four six, eight, ten" until he had reached the number 49. I had tried to count also, but before I had reached 8, Grant had already announced that 49 had stood up.

One woman in her thirties, Mary Barros of Warren, stood up next to me. I was able to interview her briefly.

M.B.: I have sugar diabetes. I'm on insulin. I went into a coma for three days and was in intensive care in Roseville Medical Center. My sugar was up to 780. I'm going to tell my doctor I was healed because I don't want to take insulin.

Singer: And what if he says you're not healed?

M.B.: I look at it this way. If I'm not healed, the Lord must have a good reason. That's the way he wants me to go through life, with the shots. Then that's the way it will be. If I am healed for His own reasons, then I will be healed.

Case 8

Patient: Isabel Wilson, about 70, of Warren, Michigan.

Grant's Diagnosis: Blindness. After "calling her out" and giving her name, her condition, and the name of her physician, Grant then "healed" her. After the "healing," Grant took her hand and, weaving his head, told her to grab his nose, which she did to great applause.

Comment: Ms. Wilson's physician, Dr. Joel Weingarten, told me: "She is considered to be legally blind by the state. She has diabetic retinopathy and has had retinal laser treatments. She can make out blurs."

—Philip Singer

ful. This is somewhat similar to the debate over laetrile, which the FDA has declared therapeutically worthless, but which nevertheless has been declared legal in several states. It seems to me that since the government has seen fit to play an ever greater role in the practice of medicine through the FDA and legislation (Medicare, Medicaid, diagnostic related groups), the government must also take a hard look at so-called spiritual healers.

In the final analysis, as a medical anthropologist, I endorse the stand taken by one of the acknowledged greats of anthro-

pology, Alfred Louis Kroeber. He observed that there are objective criteria for what constitutes "cultural quality" in a more advanced culture. He said that, to the degree that a culture disengages itself from reliance on magic and superstition, it has advanced. To the degree that it admits magic in its operations, it is primitive. He based this judgment upon the observation that, in cultures like ours that tend to disregard magic, its appearance is found among individuals who are psychotic, mentally deteriorated, or otherwise subnormal—and among individuals, I would add, like faith-healers. •

On the Relative Sincerity of Faith-Healers

Joseph E. Barnhart

In his book *Give Me that Prime Time Religion*, Jerry Sholes, formerly a writer for Oral Roberts's television shows, portrays the Reverend Roberts as a liar and a manipulator of human beings in their most vulnerable moments.¹ By contrast, David Edwin Harrell, Jr., in *Oral Roberts, An American Life*, claims that his own objective investigation reveals "Oral Roberts to be a sincere and honorable man."² Harrell appears to presume that sincerity provides a *prima facie* reason for classifying someone as honorable. I do not agree, and later in this article I will try to indicate how sincerity, while normally a virtue, is notoriously easy to maintain in the faith-healing business.

For two reasons, so-called faith-healers have been a perpetual embarrassment to the majority of fundamentalists, evangelicals, and main-line Christians. In the first place, faith-healers make grandiose claims that seem, at least on the surface, to be incredible and outlandish. One excellent study of modern American faith-healers and charismatics, *All Things Are Possible*, by Harrell, indicates how the faith-healers of the previous generation lost credibility among even Pentecostal churches.

Miracles became too commonplace, claims too unbelievable, prophets too available. Honest participants in the revival were disturbed by the popularity of frauds and extremists. The old revival died a slow and introspective death.³

Contemporary faith-healers may be slicker in some cases than their forebears of a previous generation, but the cruelty by which they raise expectations without improving their miserable record in actual healing of the infirm has remained unchanged. As James Randi notes elsewhere in this issue, the genuinely testable cases of conspicuous diseases and infirmities are conspicuously not cured at the healing services. Those who arrive at a service on their own self-supporting legs and are placed in wheelchairs after arriving are able to walk away under their own power. Those who arrive in their own wheelchairs because they cannot walk, however, leave uncured in the wheelchairs they came in.

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In the summer of 1954 in Nashville I talked with a woman and her son, who looked to be in his early twenties. He was frail, terribly thin and weak, and suffering from a respiratory ailment. He had been to an Oral Roberts revival a year earlier and had been prayed over. I asked the young man if he had been cured. His mother cut in and answered by saying that he was better. I still remember looking at him as he lay helpless on the cot. I remember thinking that this was not the image of health and healing that Roberts verbally portrays at his revival meetings.

A. C. Gaebelein, in his book *The Healing Question*, tells of a little girl

who wore a pair of glasses one-half of which was entirely black. I gathered that she was totally blind in one eye and almost blind in the other. I sat upon the stage very close to the whole procedure. While prayer was being made for her, the little girl, who appeared to be about 11 years of age, wept and sobbed and writhed in her eagerness to secure *the help that she had been led to expect*. [Italics added.] She left the platform and public claim was made by one of the workers that she had been healed, and the little girl verified the claim by a nod of the head given in reply to the question of the workers. An hour later, when the meeting was out, I noticed a small cluster of women near the platform. I thought I saw the blind little girl in their midst, so I asked my wife to go over and investigate and talk to her if necessary. She found the erstwhile "cured" girl flat on her face on the floor, sobbing, with shattered hopes and a broken heart. Her disappointment was complete, and so was her disillusionment. The improved sight that she seemed to have had in the midst of the excitement on the platform had disappeared, and with it the hope of the little girl.⁴

Harrell's *Oral Roberts, An American Life* is the best work on this evangelist. But, in his attempt to be fair to Roberts, Professor Harrell has forgotten that leaning over backward is not always the best position from which to write an objective biography. While not accepting Roberts's claim to be an instrument of divine healing, Harrell appears nevertheless to believe that, as long as the faith-healer sincerely thinks that he is divinely commissioned to utter his putative healing promises and actually attempts to work miracles, then the healer *qua* healer is exempt from moral censure. This I cannot accept. Indeed, Oral Roberts, going far beyond most evangelicals, believes that he receives divine revelations that cannot be ques-

tioned. To question them seriously is, in his mind, to oppose God. This means that Oral Roberts sets himself up as infallible when uttering what he judges to be divine revelations and commands delivered through him.

Margaret Poloma is another contemporary writer who goes out of her way to be fair to faith-healers. One might wish she had shown the same concern for the obviously infirm and sick who have attended the healing services and have left with no obvious cure. In her book *The Charismatic Movement*, she complains that modern Western medicine, by becoming too "materialistic and rational," has ignored the "spiritual dimension" in healing. Unfortunately, the slippery term *spiritual* lends itself readily to both obfuscation and ambiguity. Like Oral Roberts in his new image as the founder of a hospital in Tulsa, Poloma talks of "holistic" medicine and appears to think that charismatics have been at the forefront of this new emphasis in medicine.⁵

The "laying on of hands," however, need not be regarded as a special divine touch that guarantees supernatural healing. Rather, it may be demythologized and seen in a humanistic context to be a *human touch* of kindness in the ordinary healing process. There is no need to reduce modern medical method to injections or intrusion into the skin, insertions into the rectum, and intake down the throat. In the healing process, the central nervous system can be influenced by a human touch on the skin, a kind word in the ear, or a smile for the eyes to see. None of these is an extraordinary charismatic phenomenon that promises supernatural miracles. Rather, each is a facet of what might be called the "social reinforcers" of the healing process. To omit them is to omit a vital part of recovery from illness. Fortunately, social reinforcers are available to every society and are not dependent upon the supernaturalistic paradigm.

There is a second reason that faith-healers embarrass a large number of Christians. Main-line Christians know that the Bible presupposes a world-view in which the cure of diseases comes through a healer whose "skill" is little more than the laying on of hands or offering prayers. Faith-healers embarrass them by reminding them of this world-view. Many contemporary Christians believe that so-called faith-healers are frauds. Jerry Falwell, for example, has no truck with Oral Roberts. Some evangelicals believe that the day of miraculous cures ended in the first century of Christianity. For them, the miracles were given as temporary and expendable "signs" to help initiate the new covenant of saving grace. Once the new covenant had become effective and institutionalized in churches, the expectation of signs and healing miracles ceased. This position is a safe one in that it allows the modern believer to claim that God did in fact work healing miracles in the past. The "evidence" for such cures is limited to the claims made in the Bible.

Today, however, the evidence must include medical tests prior to and after the healing service to determine if the prediction of the elimination of a specified disease has in fact been fulfilled. Perhaps this is the appropriate place to quote from the last page of Eve Simson's remarkable study, *The Faith Healer: Deliverance Evangelism in North America*.



Oral Roberts

Over the years, while conducting my investigation of deliverance evangelism, I met individuals who testified that they had received a miraculous cure, and I witnessed many claims to instantaneous cures at the revival meetings. But I was not able to obtain enough proof for any of them to convince me that they were true miracles of healing. At no time did I encounter anyone who testified to something like the regrowth of the severed arm or leg. Nor am I, according to some of the devotees of faith healing, likely ever to witness it, because, they claim, to see a severed limb instantaneously restored would destroy faith by pushing it into the realm of certainty.⁶

Most contemporary Christians simply do not believe that faith-healers can meet contemporary tests of their claims. W. V. Grant, as do most so-called faith-healers, knows better than to claim that he can heal. If he receives direct credit for healing, he must also receive the blame for failing to heal. "I'm only God's instrument," Grant proclaims. "God does the healing." Later, I will show how professional faith-healers like Grant cleverly shift the burden of falsified predictions off their shoulders and onto those of the participants in the audience. Indeed, I will argue that what the faith-healers generate is not healing but *faith* in healing and faith in themselves as special instruments of divinity.

True to his new image and quest for respectability, Oral Roberts has shifted his emphasis considerably. Some critics have pointed out that his television ministry includes more slick secular entertainment and talk about healing *financial* illness and fewer of the old-fashioned healing lines that once characterized it. The new emphasis purports to combine faith-healing with the latest medical treatment. Praying and laying

on of hands becomes almost supplemental. This mingling of magic and technology is nothing new. "Polynesian canoe-building is technically admirable as well as dedicated to the gods. Between the poles of magic . . . and science . . . is a grading where the two phenomena coexist."⁷

As noted earlier, much of the putative "spiritual" contribution of the charismatics can be demythologized or translated into important social reinforcers stripped of their supernaturalistic/magical framing. The advantage of this translation lies in the possibility of systematically, and sometimes scientifically, researching the role of social reinforcers in the healing process. If faith-healers wish to submit their predictions of supernatural healing to scientific analysis, rationalists will welcome their efforts to do so. Unfortunately, as James Randi has often pointed out, the workers of flimflam are usually highly imaginative, not in creating scientific research programs, but in creating excuses to explain why their great feats will not come about under scientific scrutiny.

Unlike Oral Roberts and other faith-healers who seem to want to associate themselves with physicians, W. V. Grant tends to contrast "Dr. Jesus" with the medical profession. The harm of Grant's approach comes when his clients are led to think that their illnesses do not need the treatment of physicians. One of Grant's clients in St. Louis told Randi and me that he had cancer but that he was not going to get treatment for it because "you can't serve two masters." He meant that he was choosing God rather than a doctor, thus depriving himself of further medical care.

Now that there is increased talk of discovering a cure for cancer, Oral Roberts has developed a keen interest in it. In my opinion this clever man may succeed in finding a way to give his profession a share of the credit for developing a cancer cure, if such a cure emerges. After all, if there can be supernatural variables in the healing process, there can be supernatural variables in the scientific research process. (There is, of course, no end to the talents of theological parasites to hitch a free ride on everything that humans find to be of great and lasting value. Thus far, there has not developed a priestly class that specializes in prayers to aid pious grant-seekers to defeat their rivals in procuring grant money from the government.)

I will now change the focus of this article in order to deal with the question of why faith-healers and their followers are able to maintain their *sincerity* in the face of the faith-healers' miserable record of performance. To be sure, there are many people who are simply duped. But this raises the question of why so many seem predisposed to be duped. The answer is not a simple one, but I will give the following as at least a preliminary guideline for further criticism and exploration of the dynamics of faith-healing.

In 1966 a California housewife filed a \$100,000 suit against a psychiatrist because he not only had prescribed sexual relations with him, but had charged her for the "treatment."⁸ Even though most readers will doubtless feel at once that the psychiatrist violated a code, they will not be able to specify at once and unequivocally the specific legal violation he committed. After all, the client was not forced to go to bed with her

"Sincerity, while normally a virtue, is notoriously easy to maintain in the faith-healing business."

psychiatrist. It was a voluntary act carried out by consenting adults. Somewhat similarly, clients who seek the services of faith-healers do so voluntarily. Some go as far as to give evangelists money. And yet, many outside observers insist that the faith-healer somehow breaks a code by taking advantage of or duping clients who are in a vulnerable condition. In the case of the seducing psychiatrist, there is room for debate regarding whether his client received the promised benefit of the "treatment" or "therapy." If therapy is, in the California case, defined as the sexual activity itself, then the psychiatrist cannot be charged with fraud at that point. If, however, therapy is defined as something resulting from the sexual activity, then a case of fraud might conceivably be made if the psychiatrist failed to fulfill the contract.

By pointing out the ambiguity that often accompanies the implicit contract between therapist and client, I hope to provide some insight into the greater ambiguity that often accompanies the relationship between the client and the so-called faith-healer. I have approached this inquiry as an anthropologist might study the members of an alien tribe with which he has temporarily associated himself to some degree in order to try to understand their rituals and beliefs from their perspective without, however, losing his ability to make use of other perspectives to enrich his study.

1. My first observation is that the healing service functions for many of the participants as an electrifying *drama* of profound significance in their lives. Until this point is grasped, the "faith-healing ministry" will never be profoundly understood. If it is seen as an elaborate drama, the willingness of the audience to believe what outsiders regard as delusions can be largely explained. In fact, it is a mistake to divide the "healing service" into audience and performers. The ministers on the platform are only a part of the performance. The entire auditorium is one grand stage, with every believer or would-be believer taking a part in the stirring drama. The preacher has his assigned role, and much of what he says functions as cues for the other paid and unpaid actors. Indeed, for all of them, it is an earthly performance that soon turns into a supernatural cosmic drama, with the Holy Spirit and Jesus coming on the sacred stage. The crescendo effect is conspicuous to the careful observer, who notices that almost everything in the drama leads up to the sensational climax, the long-anticipated healing scenes. It is the ritual of maximum magical intensity.

2. In all theatrical productions there exists the element of *pretense*, of stepping boldly into the frame and becoming absorbed in it. Even the most sophisticated audience—or, perhaps, especially the most sophisticated audience—voluntarily allows itself to be caught up into the plot and to be transported by it into "another world." To the extent that this happens, the members of the audience become participants along with the paid actors. Their contributing pretense is essential if the "play" is to become more than just play. Strange as it may sound, a

serious drama is much more than a play. A good stage play gains credibility as serious drama only if it takes on a *meaning* that cannot be confined to the stage. While it does not stir the gods in the way that a sacrificial ritual/drama is expected to do, it must nevertheless have some impact on a realm beyond its own set of momentary events. A profound drama must eventually become *eventful*.

The point here is that if the participants perceive the healing service as an *eventful* drama, they will *not regard the element of pretense as fundamentally evil or deceitful*. Indeed, they will easily overlook the evangelist's seemingly obvious failures in his attempt to heal the afflicted precisely *because* they, as fellow participants in the magic-working ritual, sense themselves to be an essential part of the same hypnotic drama the evangelist is caught up in. *To condemn him is to condemn themselves. To defend him is to defend themselves*. Hence, despite conspicuous failures, believers are predisposed to insist

that the faith-healer can work miracles and call down the god(s).

3. The next point to be stressed has to do with the over-riding function of the sensational, enthralling drama of the so-called healing service. Simply stated, the primary function is that of generating *greater faith* rather than actual miraculous healings. (This is not to deny that this function can be used by the evangelist and his team to generate greater financial reward for themselves. But this is strictly a parasitic function.) Outsiders cannot but be struck by what they take to be the high degree of pretense in the healing service. They see the participants as gullible and the evangelist as either a fraud or a more or less self-deluded victimizer. The participants, however, see their pretense in an intensely positive light and label it "faith." How can outsiders understand this turning of pretense into faith? The answer lies again in the performed drama. When the actors on stage come together for their performance, they not only accept their pretense but strive to perfect it for the sake of lifting the

Faith-Healing's Biblical Roots

Gerald A. Larue

CSER Chairman

The roots of evangelistic healing lie in the Bible and in particular in the New Testament. Jesus is said to have performed a multitude of healings. Some appear to have been what we would today call "mental healings" and are usually described in the Bible as resulting from demon possession (cf. Matt. 8:28-32; 15:23-27; Luke 8:2, etc.). Some instances apparently occurred in cases of hysterical dumbness or blindness (cf. Matt. 9:32, 12:22). The numerous healings of lepers raises questions about diagnosis and whether these were really cases of true leprosy (cf. Matt. 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-42; etc.) Crippling disabilities, including palsy, lameness, and paralysis, were also healed by Jesus and in one case a withered hand was restored (Matt. 12:9-13 and parallels). Other ailments, including hemorrhaging (Matt. 9:20-22), blindness (John 9; Mark 10:46-52; Matt. 9:27-30), fevers (Matt. 8:14-15; John 4:47-53), and edema (Luke 14:1-4), are also cured.

The most dramatic restorations include the healing, by one of Jesus'

disciples, of a slave whose ear had been sliced off by a high priest (Luke 22:50-51) and the raising of the dead (Matt. 9:18-25; Luke 7:11-15), even of someone who had been entombed in a cave for four days (John 11:17-44).

Some of the ailments involved in the healings can be recognized as psychogenic. Modern medicine is familiar with psychosomatic responses, and nonmedicinal therapy (or perhaps the use of placebos) often restores the patient's health. Reports of persons being raised from the dead can be attributed to their actually having been comatose; morticians' tales suggest that even modern medicine has room for misdiagnosis. The healing of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26 has been explained as using couching or reclamation to remove a degenerative cataract that caused the blindness. The practice was known in India as early as 600 B.C.E. and was practiced until the eighteenth century. Celsus (c. 30 C.E.) mentioned such an operation.

What is most important about the healing miracles attributed to Jesus is

their theological implication. The miracles reveal his supernatural power and demonstrate, in physical terms, that he was the messiah. In other words, according to New Testament writers, only the divine son of God could perform such healing miracles. However, there is clear evidence of claims that similar healings were performed by others in the ancient Near East during that same period.

Modern evangelical healers who suggest that they are performing "the Lord's work" and are fulfilling Jesus' prediction that "greater works than these will he do" fail in their calling in at least two dimensions. First, there is no evidence that Jesus constantly begged for money. One would imagine that, if he had, he would have been willing to account for the expenditure of what he received. There is no evidence that Jesus lived in luxury; one cannot always say the same for those who heal in his name. Second, no modern healer has equaled Jesus' greatest feat, the raising of the dead—particularly someone who has been in a tomb for at least four days.

"What the faith-healers generate is not healing but *faith* in healing and faith in themselves as special instruments of divinity."

play out of the mundane mechanical performance of words and gestures and into the emergent realm of true drama coming to life. A profound shift comes into being.

Dostoevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov* features a faith-healer, the elder Zossima, who exemplifies Dostoevsky's view that it is not that miracles create faith but that faith creates miracles. My thesis is that the function of the so-called healing services of W. V. Grant, Oral Roberts, and their professional colleagues is not really to create healing miracles but to create the predisposition to *believe* that such miracles have been or can be experienced. The fact that many attempted miracles fail is perceived in the drama as a cue that the faith that generates miracles needs to be strengthened. Hence, instead of losing faith when the miracles do not conspicuously appear, the participants strive all the more to increase their faith. In short, in order to keep the entire system afloat, it is crucial for the believers to double their pretense. It is their religious duty.

There are some things in life that do not come into being except through belief or faith-behavior. As William James noted, one must believe in the genuine possibility of a friendship to develop in order for it to come into existence. One acts friendly in order to establish friendship. Similarly, if there is a supernatural realm, then in order to be transported into the life of supernatural miracles one must act as if one were already in such a life. I interpret the healing services, therefore, as in part a kind of stage rehearsal just in case the real performance of actually witnessing miracles comes into being. This is a part of the fevered excitement and intense expectation of healing meetings. Who can tell when the Holy Spirit will really take over the meeting and work supernatural miracles? Eventually, as the real "happening" fails to come into being, the rehearsed drama becomes for many the real performance. Faith has produced supernatural "reality" for them.

Indeed, the participants cannot truly become a living part of their drama until they in some respects forget that they are *merely* pretending. The professional actor knows that he is pretending to be Iago, but he cannot *merely* pretend. Although he knows that he is not Iago, he must in some sense become Iago in order to bring out the "truth" of Iago and to bring the "truth" of the play into existence.

4. Actors vary individually as to how "real" they should take the drama and their roles. The actor who played Brigham Young in a film about the Mormon leader eventually became a Mormon off stage. I suggest that evangelists, like actors, vary individually as to how seriously they take their roles in the "faith-healing drama." Here the question of sincerity emerges. It should not be surprising that some evangelists could readily admit to themselves that many if not most of their attempted healings fail. Some could even admit that they use tricks and practice a measure of deception during the healing services.

Strange as it may seem, this admission need not entail that they view themselves as unbelievers who cynically manipu-

late gullible believers for ulterior motives. Some of these evangelists, I submit, see themselves as God's instruments for *generating the faith* that itself is necessary for genuine miracles to happen! If tricks are necessary to keep faith generated, then so be it. The end justifies the means. Indeed, the big bucks that go into the pockets of some of these evangelists are often seen as reward for performing well in the exceedingly demanding role of generating faith in people who are not always predisposed toward faith.

The healing techniques of the evangelists are disparate. Unanimously, however, those who succeeded had a powerful control over their audiences and an unwavering confidence in their own charisma. Most were dedicated to back-breaking work and spent long grueling hours in the centers of the platforms of the big tents, praying, clapping, shouting, pleading with the crippled to walk, commanding the blind to see, and bowing dramatically amidst shouts. . . . It was an exhausting, grinding, draining way of life. William Branham was a broken man after little more than a year. . . . A. A. Allen, an incredibly tough campaigner, tottered constantly on the brink of psychological collapse. . . .⁹

At W. V. Grant's St. Louis healing service, something happened that, in my judgment, called on evangelist Grant to make use of a technique of deception of the kind that truly astounding magicians like James Randi have refined and mastered for entertainment purposes. I refer to the technique of *distraction*. Standing in an aisle, the evangelist had just said to a woman:

I curse that lump in that breast to leave right now. Everybody say "In the name of Jesus." Ma'am, walk back there and get behind the little door in there and examine yourself and see if you can find that lump and come back out here and tell me what happened to it.

The woman complied and eventually returned. After hearing her tell him that she had had the lump for six months, Grant asked, "What happened to it?"

Her reply was at best obscure and subdued. In fact, it is doubtful that most people in the audience heard her disappointing answer. Instead of asking her to repeat it and inviting the audience to respond enthusiastically to her answer, Grant abruptly turned to his left, swept his hand over the audience, and announced dramatically that someone on his left had been tempted to commit suicide. The audience gasped when a young woman near the front stood up.

The point here is that evangelist Grant succeeded in quickly and cleverly *diverting attention* from the woman who had failed to give an enthusiastic report about her lump. Clearly, the evangelist's grandiose and sensational curse on the lump had not worked. But with attention now glued to the woman who had confessed to having contemplated suicide, the woman with the lump sat down.

As noted earlier, it is important to understand that an evangelist may perceive himself, not as a direct worker of miracles, but as the instrument through whom deity brings miracles into being *upon the occasion of a sufficient measure*

of faith demonstrated (in the double sense of the term) by the other participants in the healing drama. Such dramas/demonstrations are notorious for their hype and excessive claims. Some evangelists who knowingly use chicanery can nevertheless maintain relative sincerity by viewing themselves as having been appointed the exceedingly arduous task of creating faith by all-too-human means where faith is prone to languish in the lives and hearts of all-too-human believers. Calvinist Jonathan Edwards regarded a revival to be wholly the work of God. He often compared it to a sudden change in weather, something about which human mortals could do nothing. By contrast, faith-healers tend to be in the Arminian tradition, seeing themselves and their fellow participants more as conjurers than as passive recipients of faith. The intensely emotional drama of the healing service has much in common with the elaborate rain-dance performed for the purpose of eliciting manifestations of the supernatural.

The role of pretense in virtually every aspect of human social existence deserves to be explored at length. The German philosopher Hans Vaihinger has explored the subject modestly in his book *Philosophy of "As If."* The rationalist and humanist, while not participants in faith-healing, certainly do know what it is to engage in pretense. In some cases, they have become seduced by their own pretenses. They normally do not, however, wish to continue in pretense when it clashes with reality so persistently that cruelty results. While sitting in the St. Louis auditorium in November 1985 and observing W. V. Grant's healing service, I began to see how important it was to understand that the earnest participants in the service were not infected with a unique strain of pretense that I was unable to identify with personally. Rather, the difference between them and myself at that critical point was my judgment that they had been caught up in a scenario and a reinforcement network that I found to be neither reinforcing, credible, nor personally meaningful. It was enough that I could understand that it was meaningful to them.

One of the most difficult and interesting questions that psychotherapists have to face with their clients concerns the process by which one moves from knowingly pretending in order to trick others (for whatever reason) to getting tricked by one's own lie so that it is no longer a lie but something one now sincerely believes. I cannot here deal with this disturbing question but will simply close with the following unnerving account, unnerving because it reveals just how vulnerable to deception individuals can be when they perceive that they have no realistic options.

PEKING—President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana last night publicly ignored the coup which had toppled his regime and announced his intention of going ahead with his Vietnam peace mission.

Appearing tense and grim, Nkrumah addressed a Chinese Communist state banquet given in his honor here as if nothing had happened in his home country, where the army has seized power.

His Chinese hosts also politely refrained from making any public comment on the coup, which took place as Nkrumah

was flying here from Burma. . . .

Nkrumah, wearing his usual dark tunic suit, similar to the style worn by Chinese leaders, mounted a stage after dinner to speak, mainly on the need to strengthen Afro-Asian Solidarity, . . .

The deposed President was politely but not enthusiastically applauded after his speech.¹⁰

Notes

1. Jerry Sholes, *Give Me that Prime Time Religion* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1979).
2. David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *Oral Roberts, An American Life* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1985, p. ix).
3. Harrell, *All Things Are Possible* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1975), p. 7.
4. A. C. Gaebelstein, *The Healing Question* (New York: Our Hope Publication Office, 1925), p. 93.
5. See Margaret Poloma, *The Charismatic Movement: Is There a New Pentecost?* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), p. 95.
6. Eve Simson, *The Faith Healer: Deliverance Evangelism in North America* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), p. 197.
7. I. C. Jarvie and Joseph Agassi, "The Problem of the Rationality of Magic," in Bryan R. Wilson, ed., *Rationality: Key Concepts in the Social Sciences* (New York: Harper & Row), 1970, p. 189.n.
8. *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 25, 1966.
9. Harrell, *All Things Are Possible*, p. 6. Even though many fans either know or strongly suspect that television wrestling matches are fixed, they nevertheless allow themselves to be caught up in the pretense. This is of course relatively harmless, especially when compared to the consequences of pretending that a victim of cancer has been cured by faith-healing or that United States foreign policy can be guided by the Book of Revelation.
10. *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 25, 1966.

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Does Faith-Healing Work?

Paul Kurtz

The Reverend Ernest Angley is a popular television preacher. His "Ernest Angley Hour" and the "Ninety and Nine Club" are beamed to a growing number of television stations. Ernest W. Angley Ministries claims the two programs air in over more than one hundred markets in the United States, Canada, the Philippines, and Africa. A native of North Carolina, Angley came to Akron, Ohio, in 1954 and built his Grace Cathedral there in 1957. He recently purchased his own television station in Akron, TV-55, and in 1985 took over the extensive television production facilities of Rex Humbard, who had been located in Akron but moved away after suffering financial difficulties. Although Akron's tire factories have virtually all closed, it still holds forth as a kind of gospel center.

The image Ernest Angley portrays is actually rather comical. He is short and chunky, and his thick brown hair looks very much like a toupee. His speech is unpolished, has a deep Southern (somewhat feminine) accent, and closely resembles an old-time populist preacher. He stretches the word "Jesus" ("Jee-ee-su-us") into four syllables and often implores his viewers to put their hands on the television screen as he shouts "Hee-ea-ul."

Angley has gained surprising notoriety as a faith-healer. On his television shows he goes through his curious antics of "healing" all kinds of afflictions: from cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and alcoholism to deafness and blindness. The magazine he edits, *The Power of the Holy Ghost*, contains enthusiastic testaments of healing: One woman reports that Angley cured her of back trouble; another testifies that he cured her anorexia bulimia; still another claims that an aneurism at the base of her skull disappeared after she made a phone call to Angley's hotline.

A Safari to Ernest Angley Country

With this in mind, FREE INQUIRY and the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER) decided to investigate Angley's healing first-hand. On January 10, I assembled a seven-member team and we set off for Akron to attend one of Angley's services. We drove to Grace Cathedral, a handsome building on the outskirts of the city. On the adjacent grounds stands a gleaming white marble statue of an angel, which I am told represents Angley's deceased wife.

The Friday-night service was to begin at 7:00 P.M.; however, the doors were open at 6:00 P.M., and invalids were ad-

mitted still earlier by a side entrance. The plan was that James Randi would pose as a decrepit cripple and that I would lead him in by the hand. Randi, with his white beard and flowing brown cape, played the part well. He had a cold and kept coughing pathetically as he limped along. He looked terrible! We went up to the side door and were beckoned to come right in by two sympathetic attendants. We were helped into a wing of the church where several ill and crippled people were already waiting, some in wheelchairs. I kept assuring Adam Jersin (Randi's pseudonym), in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, that he would feel much better after the service and that, in any case, "when you get back to the hotel you can put on a hot-pack to relieve the pain." Shortly thereafter an attendant helped us to two of the seats up front that had been cordoned off and reserved for invalids. Seated behind us was a partially paralyzed elderly woman who had been helped out of her wheelchair. We discovered that most of those present, in the front rows, at least, knew one another and seemed to attend the services regularly. Soon another elderly cripple arrived on crutches and was greeted by the ushers and by several other people nearby.

The church gradually began to fill up. Our colleagues entered through the front door and positioned themselves in various parts of the auditorium. Two of them were equipped with tape-recorders, and Randi and I were carrying hidden recorders to tape the proceedings. The stage set the tone of what was to follow: It was decorated with two huge bouquets of flowers and various shrubs and trees—all of which appeared to be fake.

The service began promptly at seven o'clock with lively musical entertainment. There was a fifty-piece choir and musical ensemble, including three trumpets, four guitars, a drum, a piano, and an organ. The music was very well done, aping a Broadway show, with a sprinkling of jazz and Gospel music.

Thirty minutes later the Reverend Angley appeared, nattily dressed in a gray suit and a tan striped tie. Early in the program Angley began his appeal for funds, first asking for a "tithe offering" and then a "love offering." As the ushers came up the aisles, Randi flashed a twenty-dollar bill, but he managed to palm it and put an empty envelope into the collection plate. I enclosed a five-dollar bill and filled in my name and address because I wanted to get on Angley's mailing list. We calculated that there was a hefty take that evening since an estimated 800 people were present, and most of them gave twice.

Angley droned on, delivering an incomprehensible sermon. He complained that he had many enemies but considered their criticism free advertising. (Angley's TV-55 had been attacked in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* the previous week for its daily programming of grade-B Hollywood movies with lots of sex and violence, which Angley had previously deplored.) Basically,

Paul Kurtz is the editor of FREE INQUIRY. He is also the editor of the recently published A Skeptic's Handbook of Parapsychology (Prometheus).

Angle's message was that we must be absolutely obedient to God and on guard against Lucifer. If we were to trust everything to God, he promised, our troubles would disappear. He also promised his expectant audience that the presence of God would soon manifest itself in the cathedral and miracles would occur.

Angle had his own troubles in 1984, which he recounts in the little booklet *Cell 15*, on sale at the book table in the church. On July 11, 1984, while on a tour of Western Europe, he was imprisoned in Munich. He had been charged with practicing medicine without a license and with promising "sure cures." He was held on suspicion of fraud.

Angle's trip to West Germany was accompanied by considerable fanfare. He had taken out full-page ads in German newspapers announcing himself as "Wunderheiler." There were 187 PR men, guards, attendants, and other camp-followers in his entourage, and his arrest caused a great deal of confusion among them. When he was released on bond, he threatened to sue, but left Germany hastily.

What Angle does not mention in *Cell 15* is that on July 8, 1984, a Swiss woman, Anna Berner, had died of a heart attack at one of his healing sessions. Moreover, German law requires a license to practice medicine at public gatherings. Angle claimed that it was not *he* who healed but *God* and that he was only an instrument of God's power. According to Angle, his arrest provoked an international incident. He also took credit for a storm that hit Munich the day after his departure, hurling hailstones "as big as tennis balls and grapefruit" on the city, injuring 300 and inflicting severe damage. He insists that Jehovah had vent his wrath on the citizens of Munich because of his arrest.

Is Angle a healer? Does he cure people? In *Cell 15* he recounts the death of his wife, Angel, which he says was a terrible blow to him. As nearly as we can determine, his wife's name was Esther Lee and she died in 1970 of colitis. According to Angle, one day "Angel" suddenly became ill. He called the family physician in Cleveland and was told to bring her to the hospital in an ambulance immediately. An hour later she died. Angle collapsed upon hearing this grim news. Why couldn't he save her? His rationalization runs as follows: About five or six weeks before her death "an anointing" came upon her to go to heaven. Angel told Ernest that the only reason she didn't want to go to heaven was that she didn't want to leave him. Angle replied: "I will tell you one thing . . . if the Lord ever starts to take you, I promise you I won't stand in your way." He then goes on to say that when "I made such a bold promise, I didn't think I would ever have to face it; but in just a few weeks, suddenly, I was confronted with the horror of keeping that promise. Angel was dying" (p. 27). This is the pretext Angle gives for being unable to save his own wife.

Let us return to the cathedral. Angle's sermon began to build up to a crescendo as he announced to the hushed audience that supernatural events would ensue and that miracles would occur. He then left the stage and moved out front. He went up to one woman, who one of his ushers had apparently seated in the front row near us, touched her on the forehead,



Ernest Angle

shouting, "Hee-ea-ul, Jee-ee-su-us!" She immediately fell back into the arms of the three attendants standing behind her and was then laid out flat on the floor and covered with a blue silk cloth.

Angle quickly proceeded down to the front of the church, touching three more persons, each of whom fell back in a swoon into the arms of the attendants. He next went to Randi, who came hobbling forth. "I command the evil spirit to leave you. In the name of Jesus I pronounce you whole." He touched Randi on the forehead, and Randi immediately fell back and was caught and laid out on the floor. Later he said that he had wanted to play along with the act to find out what was going on.

Angle next approached me and beckoned that I come forth. "Oh my gosh," I thought to myself, "Randi was the alleged cripple, not me." Angle must have thought I didn't look too well either. I quickly covered my tape recorder with my hat and stood up. He touched me on the forehead and cried out, "In the name of Jesus, he-ea-ul." I was not going to take part in this charade, so I stood my ground and did not fall back. Angle again hit me on the forehead, somewhat harder, and the attendant held my shoulder, but I didn't give in. I looked Angle straight in the eye. He said, "Do you wish to be saved? Are you born again? Is there anyone in your family that you wish to be saved? In Jesus' name I command these to happen." He put his arm behind me and forcibly tried to push me down, but I steadfastly refused to fall. We were eyeball to eyeball, and I thought to myself, "Look, you son-of-a-gun, don't try anything on me." But I didn't want to let on who I was because we were there to investigate what went on. Angle tarried a bit, and then left me, moving on to the next victim as I reclaimed my seat on the bench. Randi was still stretched out on the floor. All around me people were crying. On my left a woman was talking gibberish, "speaking in tongues."

Angle continued this for well over an hour, moving up and down in the front of the auditorium. As the people came up to him, he asked what their problems were. One young man, Steve Bruch, age twenty-one, came back three times, was



touched by Angley and fell back each time. After the third time Angley questioned him and declared that a miracle had occurred. Steve attested to the fact that he could now straighten his knee and the pain had disappeared.

Angley called out, asking that any alcoholics or drug addicts who wished to be healed come forth. Several people moved to the front. One elderly gentleman in a dark pin-striped suit who said he was an alcoholic fell back in tears when Angley touched him. Later, Angley returned to question him, examined his hand, and declared that another miracle had occurred.

In another case, a man presented his twelve-year-old son to Angley. The boy wore a hearing aid in each ear. The father said the boy had a 90-percent hearing loss and had difficulty with his speech. Angley ordered the boy to take off his hearing aids and then walked around him, shouting "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" He said to the boy, "Say Jee-ee-su-us," which he did, though it was barely audible. Yet Angley declared that this was another miracle and that this young lad's hearing and speech would improve when he returned home.

Angley repeated several times that miracles had occurred. The loudspeaker system was adroitly turned off and on and raised and lowered to highlight only some conversations. Generally it only picked up Angley's voice and not what was said by those he talked to—unless he wanted it that way. So one could not always verify what Angley's subjects said before and after the "healings." One woman, accompanied by her son, reported that she had brought the boy there five years earlier when he had a large tumor. Angley prayed for him, she said. The boy had surgery immediately thereafter, the tumor was removed, and he recovered rapidly. She attributed his recovery to the Reverend Angley, and he again declared, "Hallelujah!" Another miracle had occurred!

Next Angley walked back and forth pointing to one section of the auditorium at a time. He said that there was a person in one section with a bad kidney. "You've got your miracle," he

proclaimed. Pointing to the next section he said there were eight people with back trouble and that they would be healed. In the next, he said that someone had chest pains and heart trouble and would be healed. I was doubtful about all of these claims, since very few people verified his pronouncements or his prophecies.

Nonetheless, the audience remained transfixed. Approximately half of those present—some 400 people—came to the front to be healed. Most of those assembled were dramatically involved, intensely emotional, and simply overwhelmed.

As the healing session concluded, several hundred moved toward the front of the church lustily singing hymns; many were tearful, others joyful, still others babbled in tongues. Angley was in complete control of the audience. One got the impression that he could have commanded them to do almost anything and that they would have obeyed. I was reminded of Jim Jones's hypnotic power over his flock in Guyana.

As the meeting began to break up, Randi, the rest of our team and I attempted to contact those for whom Angley had proclaimed a miracle. Given the hustle and bustle, it was virtually impossible to do so. Nonetheless, I managed to question two people. The first was Steve Bruch. I learned that he was unemployed and lived with relatives in Wellington, a town about an hour from Akron. Steve had come to the front and fallen down three times. "What was your ailment?" I asked. He replied that he had cartilage in his knee that caused it to go out of joint and made it painful to use his leg, and that Angley had repaired it.

"Had that ever happened before?" I asked.

"Yes" said Steve, "The knee often goes out."

"But if you stretch it does it go back in?" I asked.

"Yes," he said.

"Was that a genuine miracle?" I asked. He just smiled.

Next I encountered the man who said he was an alcoholic. He was being led from the auditorium by a large, buxom woman, no doubt his wife. "Excuse me, sir," I said. "I was intrigued by the fact that the Reverend Angley pronounced a miracle over you. Are you an alcoholic?"

"Yes," he said.

"How long have you been drinking?" I asked.

"Oh," he said, "I stopped drinking many years ago. Indeed, twice."

"But why are you an alcoholic?" I asked.

He replied, "Well once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic."

"What was the miracle?" I asked him.

He said that he had shown Angley a finger he had broken a few months before and that it had been bent. He showed me his crooked finger. "It's still bent," I said.

"Yes" he replied "But it is a bit straighter than before." This was Angley's miracle.

Evaluating the Claims of Faith-Healers

According to Angley, a great number of people in the auditorium that night had been cured, but this is highly questionable. On television, Angley proclaims healings week after week. What are we to make of these alleged miracles? Are they genuine? It is clear that we have to be extremely skeptical

The "Miracles" at Lourdes

One of the most famous centers for miraculous cures is located in Lourdes, a small town at the foot of the Pyrenees in southwestern France. Every afternoon at four o'clock, throngs of the sick and handicapped enter the valley of the grotto of the Virgin Mary for prayer, song, and hope for a recovery.

The shrine has been recognized by the Catholic church since 1862, four years after an illiterate and asthmatic village girl of fourteen, Bernadette Soubirous, gathered stones there and claimed that she had visions of the Virgin Mary. At first considered mad, in time Bernadette was proclaimed a saint, though she died in her early thirties of cancer. Since that time tens of millions have visited Lourdes, prayed before the shrine, or bathed in its waters. Lourdes has become a mecca for desperate people.

There have been approximately six thousand claimed recoveries, but the church has officially recognized only sixty-four as "miracles." The Catholic church established the *Bureau des Constatations Medicales* to examine all claims of cures. The last allegedly occurred in 1970, when Serge Perrin of Angers, France, was said to have regained his sight. The odds of a "cure" are about that for winning a

lottery, one in a million, yet people keep flocking to the shrine, and many return time and again. For example, Paul Russell, thirty-two, of Kendall Park, New Jersey, lost the use of one arm and both legs in an automobile accident in 1972 and has made a pilgrimage to Lourdes every year for nine years. Indeed, the town has only 18,000 inhabitants, but now has 400 hotels, more than any other city in France, except Paris and Nice.

In the nineteenth century the Catholic press sensationalized many alleged miracles. In response, skeptics like Emile Zola visited Lourdes and exposed several cures as fraudulent. The strongest defender of the shrine was Alexis Carrel, a Nobel Prize winner in medicine, who was converted after his visit to the shrine in 1903. According to the *Bureau des Constatations Medicales*, for a cure to be accepted, (a) the person's medical condition must have been certified by exact medical diagnosis beforehand; (b) the condition must have been organic; (c) it must have been regarded as either incurable or treatable only by lengthy therapy; and (d) a complete recovery must have occurred at the time of the visit to the shrine.

What of the alleged sixty-four cases that fulfilled these criteria? Dr.

D. J. West examined eleven of the most recent cases deemed miraculous and found flaws in every one of them. He noted the inadequate clinical facilities and documentation by the *Bureau*. There were several dubious examples of cures of malignant tumors, many inadequately verified cases of tuberculosis, and a preponderance of elderly spinsters who had allegedly received physical benefits. There have not been any totally neutral investigations in which controlled studies of the Lourdes pilgrims have been conducted. Without this documentation, one must be skeptical about the claims.

One point often overlooked: How many people have been harmed by their visits to Lourdes? The conditions of the baths at Lourdes are unsanitary and substandard. My wife, who grew up in France, reports that she accompanied her classmates to Lourdes as a young girl and that when they visited the shrine they were each placed in a tub of cold, running water, following the immersion of people with all sorts of afflictions, including open sores. How many people have contracted infectious diseases at Lourdes can not be easily calculated, but it is most likely far more than sixty-four.—P.K.

about any claims that a miracle has occurred. Likewise, we have to be extremely careful about the accuracy of subjective reports of such healings by the recipients. Several steps should be taken before accepting the claims of a faith-healer:

1. One would need to diagnose the case beforehand. Often what we get are garbled accounts by patients of what their preexisting conditions were. We need careful documentation of their conditions, including X-rays, blood tests, and other medical records. Often we hear the claim that "the doctors had given up" or that "the doctors could do no more for me," or that the person was "incurable." But are these statements accurate? There are no doubt some cases of mistaken diagnoses. Facile public proclamations of illnesses need medical corroboration.

2. One needs to follow up such cases after the fact to see whether the subjects' conditions have actually improved and whether orthodox medical treatment is being given currently. Simple testimonials by preachers or their parishioners are not sufficient in themselves. Yet that is what most of the claims of cures are based upon. Television evangelists like Pat Robertson who report telephone conversations with people they claim

were cured, provide no independent corroboration that such claims are accurate.

Clearly we must recognize the psychosomatic nature of many illnesses. When an illness has a psychological component, a patient may very well be helped by a dramatic healing session, especially if he believes in the healer. Suggestion can be a powerful tool. But it is not Jesus or God who helps the patient but the *belief-state* itself, which acts as a placebo. This may be the case in some hysterically induced illnesses (such as paralysis), as Charcot and Freud observed. Hence, in some situations the healer, in spite of his evoking God, may function as a psychotherapist. Faith-healing *may* provide some help in alleviating symptoms of stress-induced illnesses like ulcers and asthma. The "bedside manner" of the physician or the psychiatrist plays a role in many healing situations. The state of mind of the patient, especially the confidence that he or she will get better, may be therapeutically self-fulfilling. Given the emotionally charged atmosphere of a mass healing session, many people may be carried away by the infectious enthusiasm and may feel better, at least momentarily, and even may be persuaded that a "miracle" has taken place. A "miracle" is a

Pat Robertson and the "700 Club"

Pat Robertson is no doubt the most powerful of the televangelists in terms of financial resources. His potential presidential candidacy threatens to upset all the political calculations for the 1988 campaign. Robertson is also heavily involved in faith-healing, a basic staple of the "700 Club" and the Christian Broadcast Network, which radiates to hundreds of stations.

Robertson and his co-moderator, Ben Kinslow, use a method of faith healing that is highly questionable. They offer "words of knowledge" from their television studio. They claim to be able to see that someone is suffering from a particular malady, and they predict that prayer will effect a cure. Thus in a typical evening broadcast they might report: "I see someone who has had tightness about the chest for two weeks. The pain is gone." Or "I have a word of knowledge that someone has a problem with a tracheotomy. God is miraculously healing it." Or "Someone had a headache. It is now gone." Or "I see stomach pains at this moment. Gastritis. The Lord has healed you." Pat Robertson says, "In Jesus's name, do miracles. Supply every need. A time of miracles, a time of blessing."

Robertson and Kinslow report that the studio is bombarded during the broadcast by hundreds of people calling in to report their miraculous cures. A man calls in from Chicago to say that the tightness in his chest has disappeared. Several people call to say that their headaches have gone away. Someone calls from Altoona to say that a man had a tracheotomy and has been in a coma with brain damage but is now waking up. A woman from Texarkana, Kansas, reports that she had a growth on her leg, but that after Ben gave his word of knowledge it disappeared. "God is still in the miracle business," Ben the "healing of emphysema," and another reported "healing of the deterioration of the hip."

The reports of miraculous cures are not only in response to the "words of

knowledge" but to conversations with counselors on the hotline. If people have problems, they call in for help and prayer. "If you need help," Pat Robertson assures his viewers, "pick up the phone and call us." And the reports proliferate about wondrous cures.

What is to be said about this phenomenon? First, there is no way that one can verify the preexisting medical condition, the cure that allegedly occurred, or whether the cure is permanent. Second, even if a condition does improve, the improvement is not necessarily due to a television "miracle." Robertson is not only claiming help for psychosomatic illnesses, in which the psychological state of the person may be a factor, but also for organic illnesses.

A good illustration of the problem of corroboration is the film report that the "700 Club" ran in mid-January 1986 of the case of Chrys and David Helm. The Helms had one child and wanted another, but Mrs. Helm was unable to conceive. She went to several doctors over a two-year period, was treated with Perganol and other drugs, but to no avail. Mrs. Helm reports that her doctor advised her that statistics indicated she would never have another child. The Helm family constantly prayed to the Lord to give them another child. In great despair, Mrs. Helm called the "700 Club" on December 23, 1983. She reports that Pat Robertson, in his "word of knowledge," said: "A woman is praying for a child. She is praying that her womb might be fertile. God is going to give her a child. It will be by the Grace of God."

On January 16, 1984, Mrs. Helm's doctor informed her that she was pregnant. Even more incredibly, she reports that the doctor discovered in March, by sonar detection, that she would have twins, which were eventually born. In the follow-up report, Pat Robertson takes credit for the birth, saying that it was by the "Grace of God." But he does not acknowledge that the Helms evidently had sexual



intercourse in December and that the conception was due to the union of egg and sperm, not to the prayers of Robertson.

The entire "700 Club" faith-healing procedure is a charade: Robertson and Kinslow are doing "cold readings"; that is, they are naming illnesses and predicting their cure. With millions of listeners, the probabilities are that a certain percentage of them will have the conditions named and also that a percentage will be cured by normal means. At this moment, for example, I can say that someone who is reading this article has a severe case of gastritis, but that it will be cured. I dare say that statistically I am probably correct. But I surely can't take credit for such predictions. Pat Robertson constantly does.

In the fall of 1985, Pat Robertson and his co-hosts on the "700 Club" offered prayers to ask God to push Hurricane Gloria away from the Virginia coast. When Gloria moved out to sea, Robertson said that the prayers worked!

Incidentally, I called the "700 Club" hotline to report that every time I watched the program I felt worse. Indeed, my headache intensified. The counselor advised me to pray on. I said that the more I prayed, the worse I felt. I even felt like vomiting. My phone call was never reported over the air.—P.K.

product of ignorance. The word is used in connection with "healing" when a patient's actual physical condition and the possible natural causes of a cure are unknown.

The question, of course, is whether the cure will be lasting, if indeed there was an affliction in the first place. A follow-up study of so-called cures is necessary. Some patients may be psychologically harmed by faith-healers, particularly when their infirmities are not helped by the healing session and they attribute the failure to their own lack of faith.

The real issue is whether faith-healers can affect *organic* illnesses like diabetes, arteriosclerosis, cancer, infectious diseases, and broken bones. Interestingly, television healers blithely maintain that they are able to do so. It is here that the serious questions of malpractice and fraud emerge; there may be considerable danger to patients who believe they will get better and neglect or delay seeking competent medical treatment in the hope of a miracle. If a subject's condition has not been previously diagnosed and he puts his faith in the healer, he may ignore medical therapy. It can be a life-or-death situation.

A story reported in the Charlotte, North Carolina, *Observer and News* on January 1, 1978, told of a woman who died of a heart attack moments after Angley prayed for her; after she fell back in the customary swoon, she was allowed to lie on the floor unattended for twenty minutes. Angley denied that she was "slain in the spirit" and maintains that she remained in the back of the hall and died later in the hospital. But protestations notwithstanding, healers are tampering with the health and lives of countless people. They should be called into account for practicing medicine without proper credentials. They insist that they are dealing with religion and not medicine, but a quack is a quack no matter what he calls himself. CSER is now embarked on a follow-up study of patients that Angley allegedly healed, and we hope to publish results of this inquiry when it is completed.

There have been at least two important scientific studies of faith-healing in recent years. One is *Faith Healing* (1968), by Louis Rose, a British clinical psychologist. In this book, Rose examines the history of faith-healing. He also investigates some modern faith-healing in Britain, such as that by Harry Edwards, Christopher Woodward, and Christian Science practitioners. According to Rose it is extremely difficult to do follow-up studies. What we would need to accept it as genuine, he says, is at least one incontrovertible case of paranormal healing that stands up under meticulous scrutiny. The basic problem, however, is that there is an abysmal lack of evidence in support of the faith-healing hypothesis. After examining literally hundreds of cases of purported cures over the years, Rose narrowed his quest to a search for just a handful of cases, perhaps only a single case, "in which the intervention of a faith-healer had led to an irrefutable case" (p. 175). It would have to be a cure not in the vague sense that the patient felt better or in the sense that a progressive disease had been limited but "in the sense that as a result of the healer's work alone, a demonstrated pathological state had been entirely eliminated." But Rose concludes that he has not found "one miracle cure."

It is important to point out that some illnesses are misdiagnosed, some (such as cancer) go into remission, and some

simply run their course and cure themselves in time. What is needed is a definitive illustration of a healer's cure.

Rose examined 95 instances of purported cures in detail. In 58 cases, it was impossible to see medical or other records to confirm the cure. In 22 cases the records were at such variance with the claims that it was considered useless to proceed with an investigation. In other cases, temporary improvement was followed by a relapse, or improvement occurred concurrent with orthodox medical treatment. There was no clear-cut, unambiguous cure by a faith-healer. Here is Rose's evaluation of some typical cases:

M.R., a boy aged 9, was suffering from pseudohypertrophic muscular dystrophy. When I examined him in December 1951 he was free of spinal deformity. He later visited Mr. Edwards (the faith healer) who told him he "would get better and that he had straightened his back." The family general practitioner wrote in February 1953: "I am sorry to report that in my opinion the condition is very definitely worse." [p. 164]

Mrs. M.H. was the subject of an article in a well-known pictorial magazine: the patient sent in her own history. After several X-ray and anesthetic examinations the hospital could do nothing more for her: she had been obliged to continue wearing her surgical belt for thirteen more years and could not get out of bed without it, but in 1949 she went to a healer at whose hands she was "cured."

When I examined the hospital records, they revealed that Mrs. M.H. had had an appendectomy in 1934 and a curetage for cervical erosion. In 1936 there was a barium investigation revealing nothing more than visceroptosis and in 1943 there was a further examination, all with negative findings. Her doctor subsequently wrote in terms which did not substantiate her claims or those of the publication and gave his opinion that there was a large factor of functional exaggeration. [pp. 156-157]

The boy J.R. was according to the headlines "permanently cured": "Psychic healing succeeded when doctors failed," one of these read. "He was given up by professors and doctors who examined him as a hopelessly incurable case. He was born paralyzed in legs and arms, he was dumb and he had a distended stomach. After four years he received one treatment and the paralysis left him" the account continued, "the next morning he spoke and could run. . . . J. has now grown into a fine young man, leading a normal, happy life."

In answer to my request, the hospital concerned reported that J.R. was an in-patient for two months in 1934, suffering from rickets, and was discharged "improved." From September 1934 to February 1935 he was treated for coeliac disease, chicken-pox and whooping cough and again discharged "improved." December 1948 to February 1949 he was suffering from Brodie's abscess of the ankle and was discharged with satisfactory results. There was no record of any other disability, temporary or permanent. [p. 157]

Mr. R.B. A biopsy was carried out on this patient in June 1953, and a week later Mr. B. was informed that he was suffering from cancer of the larynx calling for a major operation. Mr. B. applied to Harry Edwards for direct healing, and during the interview his hoarse voice began to improve in quality and gain in volume. Then, on 21 July 1953, Mr. B. was re-examined

Peter Popoff

Peter Popoff's ministry, syndicated to stations nationwide, is based in Upland, California. His television healing-sessions are similar to the Reverend W. V. Grant's. He calls out the names of people from the audience and says something about them that he could only have known from information gleaned beforehand. He may give their home addresses or the names of their husbands, wives, or children and tells them about their problems, which he then proceeds to cure.

On a recent program filmed in

Atlanta and aired nationwide, Popoff called out the names of several women and announced cures of kidney trouble, numbness of the feet, headaches, and other ailments. He even promised that he would repair a divorce, resolve family problems, and help someone who was desperately seeking a job.

Aside from dramatic scenes of Popoff hitting people on the forehead and pronouncing them "healed," there is no evidence that a cure has ever occurred. We attempted to contact several of the people he called from

the audience but could find no telephone listing for their names. A follow-up study is being done by James Randi for CSER.

Interestingly, Popoff has a new gimmick. He attempts to raise money to purchase Bibles to send to the Soviet Union. He claims that he has couriers who can get these Bibles to the Russian people, and he implores his viewers to send their money so he can ship one million Bibles behind the Iron Curtain. The fund-drive is for \$3 million.—*P.K.*

under an anaesthetic in hospital and informed that the pathologist's report was at variance with the previous one. Independent examination was arranged and a later report ran: "In all Mr. B. has been examined by five throat specialists, one of whom is considered the greatest authority on cancer in this country. The two specialists who examined him after he had had the direct healing from Mr. Edwards both reported "no cancer now." One of the surgeons wrote to me in December 1953: "I doubt if anyone will give a definite reply. . . . My own belief is that it was pure fortunate coincidence that this man had a piece removed for biopsy and it had happened to contain all of the carcinomatous tissues." [p. 158]

Another important study is by William Nolen, a surgeon from Minnesota. In his book *Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle* (1974), Nolen recounts the growth of his interest in various forms of faith-healing and his investigation of its effectiveness. Probably the most popular faith-healer a generation ago was Kathryn Kuhlman. Nolen visited her healing sessions, where hundreds, even thousands, of afflicted people would come forth and be declared healed. He describes what occurred: "At one point a young man with liver cancer staggered down the aisle in a vain attempt to claim a 'cure.' He was turned away, gently. . . . When he collapsed into a chair I could see his bulging abdomen—as tumor-laden as it had been earlier" (p. 59). Nolen concludes that "all the desperately ill patients who had been in wheelchairs were still in wheelchairs. In fact, [the] man with . . . kidney cancer in his spine and hip . . . was now back in his wheelchair. His 'cure,' even if only a hysterical one, had been extremely short-lived" (p. 60).

Dr. Nolen was able to record the names and addresses of twenty-three people who were allegedly miraculously healed by Kuhlman. He followed up on these cases. One woman had been announced by Kuhlman to have been cured of lung cancer, but the disease persisted. Another woman with cancer of the spine had discarded her brace and followed Kathryn's command to run across the stage. The next day her backbone collapsed. Four months later she was dead. Nolen's follow-up studies showed that none of the patients he examined who had been claimed as "cures" at the service "had in fact been miraculously

cured of anything by either Kathryn Kuhlman or the Holy Ghost" (p. 81).

The more Nolen studied the results of Kuhlman's miracle services, the more doubtful he became that "any good she was doing could possibly outweigh the misery she was causing" (p. 89).

In the course of his investigation, Nolen also tracked down many other healers and patients who were supposedly cured, but still to no avail. There were no miracles to be found. Nolen thus raises the question: Does faith-healing help people? And he concludes that in cases of functional disorder or psychosomatic illnesses it may be of some help—particularly where suggestion plays a role and the autonomous voluntary nervous system is involved. Even here, though, patients may be only temporarily relieved of symptoms. Whether there are any long-lasting cures is another matter. However, any pretense of a cure does not apply to organic diseases. One cannot grow a limb or cure a diseased gall-bladder or a hernia by willing it. Nolen recognizes that many cases of cancer in remission do occur. There are far fewer cases where the cancer disappears entirely. It is estimated, he says, that perhaps only one in ten thousand or perhaps as few as one in one hundred thousand cases of cancer actually are spontaneously regressed. We don't always know the causes for this, he observed, but we have no evidence at all that they are due to miracles or to the intervention of a faith-healer.

Conclusion

Thus we are faced with a serious problem: Although some forms of faith-healing may relieve psychosomatic symptoms, there is no clear evidence that faith-healing can cure organic illness; and yet faith-healing has become fashionable. Countless numbers of people are now being deceived in healing sessions and by television reports of these services. Faith-healers are practicing medicine without license outside the confines of regulation. Their religious beliefs are appealed to in order to provide immunity from criticism. It is time that they be called to public account. ●

ON THE BARRICADES

No Democracy Without Religion, Says Brookings Institution

Permitting a moment of silence in the public schools that could be used for voluntary prayer, allowing student religious groups to use public-school facilities, and giving tax-credits for parochial school tuition are just some of the recommendations of a new study by the prestigious Brookings Institution.

The 389-page report, "Religion in American Public Life" is the result of a three-year look at society. Conclusion: The strength and stability of American democracy depend upon the underpinnings of religion.

Without religion, says the report, "democracy lacks the essential moral support" to sustain it. Secular value systems fail "to meet the test of intellectual credibility" for doing the job, the report continues.

The Brookings Institution is a Washington, D.C.-based "think tank" whose appraisals have generally been regarded as liberal. Meanwhile, in another study, this one by the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, its former president, Jeffrey K. Hadden, predicts that fundamentalism and the Religious Right are destined to become the major social movement of the remainder of this century.

Hadden attributes the influence of these groups to their dominance in religious broadcasting. "Media access is a critical resource in a social movement and . . . the 'televangelists' have greater unrestrained access to media than any other interest group in America," he said.

Bible-Course Protest Forces Family to Move

A business has closed and a family has been forced to move as a result of complaints about classes on the Bible being offered in elementary and middle schools in Dunn, North Carolina.

Laurey Wyble, who had two sons in the town's elementary school, complained about the courses, which had been funded by the Inter-Denominational Bible Fund for forty-four years. Supporters of the program said the classes were voluntary, that non-public school teachers were employed to teach them, and that they focused on the

Bible as literature, history, and poetry. But Mrs. Wyble argued that the classes violated the constitutional separation of church and state. In response to her inquiry, the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union sent a letter to school officials that said the classes were offered "for the purpose of religious inculcation and not merely educational purposes," and the program was dropped.

The action provoked an outcry spearheaded by Hoover Adams, publisher and editor of the local newspaper, the *Daily Record*. In response to a call for comments from the paper, one reader wrote: "I'm tired of the Communists, humanists, and the atheists ruling in our schools."

In response to the published attacks and harrassing phone calls, Mr. and Mrs. Wyble, their three sons, and Mrs. Wyble's parents, who owned a business in Dunn that employed about thirty-five persons, moved.

Controversy Follows Court Witness's Refusal to "Swear to God"

New York State's highest court has overturned a murder conviction in a case in which the prosecution challenged the refusal of a defense witness to swear to God that he would tell the truth.

Witnesses in New York trials, in place of the traditional oath to God, are permitted to instead "affirm" that their testimony is true. Psychiatrist Stephen Teich exercised that option when he was called to testify on behalf of a man accused of murder, because he believed that the doctrine of separation of church and state precluded the mention of God in the courtroom.

The judge allowed the prosecution to question Teich over his refusal to take the traditional oath, in spite of the defense attorney's objections. Although the judge later instructed the jury that "an affirmation . . . is equivalent to an oath and is just as binding," a unanimous decision by the Court of Appeals to overturn the resulting conviction said that that wasn't good enough.

Good-bye Moral Majority, Hello Liberty Federation

The Reverend Jerry Falwell insists his decision to submerge his Moral Majority organization into the new "Liberty Federation" is not a retreat, but observers say otherwise.

Falwell blames the media for frightening people away from association with the Moral Majority. "There are a lot of people who will say yes to everything we are saying, but they dare not stand with us on particular policies for fear of getting tarred, hurt—that is, picking up baggage that the media has dumped on us," he says.

His new Liberty Federation, he says, will expand the scope of the old Moral Majority to include efforts in support of national defense, balancing the budget, and fighting communism. "We are not disbanding or retreating," says Falwell. "We are engaging the enemy on new ground, enlarging our outreach, incorporating an expanding agenda while reaffirming our commitment to the existing agenda."

But others say the change means that Falwell's influence is waning, and they attribute that to several factors, including his criticism of South African Bishop Desmond Tutu and the public's distaste for the Moral Majority's stated concern with the affairs and behavior of private individuals.

"Holier-than-thou, it seems, just isn't selling anymore. Fundamental certitudes have wavered in the face of inveterate, although often submerged, American pluralism," wrote newspaper columnist Mary McGrory.



God Helps Those Who Help Themselves

The Wild World of Fundamentalist Fund-raising

Thomas Flynn

"Do you want some money?" writes the evangelist. "I want to send it to you. God wants to see your faith! God wants to know if you would feel better if you received an extra \$700.00 (SEVEN HUNDRED DOLLAR) Money Blessing. Show God you have faith enough—send a [sic] \$18.00 Donation for the Ministry."

No, the above is not taken from a segment of "Hill Street Blues" dealing with religious bunco. Nor, unfortunately, is it a fabrication. It is a direct quote from a sophisticated circular thousands of Americans found in their mailboxes in 1984. In its consummate, if cynical, craftsmanship, it exemplifies the way some conservative national televangelists use direct-marketing techniques to fund their ministries.

Direct Marketing (DM)—a term that has largely replaced "direct mail" in the business lexicon and embraces such varied techniques as catalog sales, direct mail, and telemarketing (semi-automated telephone solicitation)—is undergoing an unprecedented renaissance in America today. "Junk mail" has been a familiar annoyance for decades, of course. But technological developments of the past decade, which have made the building and maintenance of huge lists of prospects easier and more efficient, have tremendously increased the attractiveness and power of DM techniques. Legitimate businesses use DM to sell books, records, and other consumer products, to promote industrial products and supplies, and to advertise business management seminars, to use only a few examples. Nonprofit and political organizations use its methods effectively to promote their viewpoints and solicit contributions. A growing variety of media are available to the DM user, from television to special newspapers and magazines designed specifically to serve as DM marketplaces. But the mails have continued to hold their own as a popular and powerful DM medium.

America's national fundamentalist ministries are active DM users. Many televangelists who depend on buying air-time from

local stations are reluctant to actively solicit funds on their programs lest station managers take offense. The televangelists may sell reasonably priced merchandise or even offer gifts to induce viewers to write in. When the viewers write and identify what offer prompted them to do so, their names go on a DM list and the fund-raising begins in earnest. This article will explore a representative sample of the fund-raisers' output, discuss some of the techniques that go into the design of a successful DM mailing, and evaluate the evangelistic mailings according to the standards that apply to other, nonreligious direct-marketers.

To begin, let us return to the mailer quoted at the beginning of this article—the one that speaks so elliptically of a "\$700.00 Money Blessing." Its design reflects sophisticated DM design philosophies. Its source: the Reverend Ike of the United Christian Evangelical Association, whose address is a post office box in New York City.

Ike's mailing contains several separate pieces; each piece repeats the core message with a slightly different slant. DM researchers say this technique improves the effectiveness of almost any mailing—if the cover letter fails to "hook" the reader, perhaps another one of the enclosures will. Many of the pieces also bear the mark of contemporary word-processing technology, which allows the recipient's name to be injected into the copy at almost any point, "personalizing" the letter. This technique has been found to increase readership, even though most readers know the mailing is not truly personal.

Other proven design techniques inject a disingenuous degree of phony informality. Ike's mailing is printed to look as though it were typewritten on a page torn from a child's school notebook. And the page is emblazoned with underlines, circles, and margin notes in various colors, as though the writer emphasized key points by using a small arsenal of felt-tip markers. The resulting cacophony of multichromatic marginalia could be used as evidence to support a claim that the Reverend Ike tapes his pieces to the outside of New York subway cars before they are mailed.

Another powerful technique is to force the reader to become physically involved in the act of responding to an offer. Many magazines, including *FREE INQUIRY*, use subscription solicitations in which the respondent must punch out or peel off a medallion-like "acceptance token" and attach it to the order form. Research suggests that respondents who have

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gone to this much trouble are thereby insulated to some degree against changes of heart until after the acceptance is in the mail. Still another proven force-multiplier: Give the recipient exact and detailed instructions as to how to respond. Reverend Ike exploits various current marketing methodologies. He specifies the peculiar donation amount of \$18.00, and then requires the recipient to check off some boxes and return the enclosed tiny swatch of carpet—allegedly trimmed from the Reverend's prayer rug—with the donation. In return, Ike promises to send each respondent a "Three Day Good Luck Package." (Even after prolonged inspection, no language was found describing a specific procedure for obtaining the above-mentioned \$700.00 Money Blessing.)

Another Reverend Ike mailing includes a scrap of cloth that is almost—but not quite—claimed to have come from a garment of Christ. The copy eventually admits that the swatch came from Ike's prayer robe. "I have touched this garment with both hands, and I prayed over it for you and your needs," Ike writes with passion. "Now I ask you in the name of Jesus to take this little piece of blessed heavenly garment out and touch it to your forehead three (3) times." Ike specifies further rituals to be performed with the cloth, then gets to the point: "Now the first thing tomorrow morning, I want you to return this piece of 'Heavenly Hem' [a colored underline in the original]. Please send it back to me along with the \$33.00 faith donation!!! As soon as I receive it back from you in faith and belief I will start a prayer cycle for you, then I shall close my eyes and pray a special 'TREATMENT' prayer for you—Then I will send you 'GOD'S GOODIE' package."

The Reverend never explains what this package is, except to say that if you are a lucky recipient and "work with it . . . you will find happiness, good luck, good fortune and money as your faith increases." To climb aboard this gravy train, one turns to the order form—which bears the headline: "*Touch this garment . . . you will be well!*"—checks off some boxes, returns the fabric swatch, and encloses the \$33.00.

Lincoln is reputed to have said, "God must love the poor—He made so many of them." Using the same standard of evidence, we can confidently conclude that the Reverend Ike must love his DM mailers. Another Ike mailing follows the same pattern. No costly carpet samples or scraps of cloth here; this one contains only a cocktail napkin. But no ordinary cocktail napkin, as Ike assures us in fervid prose:

Inside the envelope . . . You'll find one of my favorite and personal napkins—it has my name and address on it—I'm letting you keep this napkin as a gift of love in exchange for a napkin from you with your name on it. . . .

Now Reverend Ike, however strongly he may believe that "God will provide," is not a man to take chances:

If you don't have a napkin within your home, I have enclosed one for you to print your name on and mail back to me.

This napkin mailer represents one of Ike's most generous bargains for his faithful. By returning the napkin and a mere \$12 donation (that sum is pre-circled on a list of suggested dona-

Touch his garment... you will
be well! According to your
faith, do what I ask you to
do. CHECK THESE OFF

☒ ONCE FOR THE SON - BELIEVE

☒ ONCE FOR THE FATHER - BELIEVE

☒ ONCE FOR THE HOLY
GHOST - BELIEVE

☒ HERE IS MY FAITH DONATION!

You must send this whole page back
along with the \$33.00 faith donation.

Mr. Paul Kurtz
P O Box 5 Central PK. Sta
Buffalo, NY. 14215

14215KRTZ52ZPLZ00 HS 85060209

I know
that giving
blessings
brings if I believe...
☒ HERE IS MY
SIGNATURE SO I
KNOW YOU GOT IT

REV. IKE, GPO Box 50, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10116

This page from a mailing by the Reverend Ike includes a scrap of cloth that he almost claims to have come from one of Christ's garments.

tions) one can receive the "GOD'S GREATEST GIFT" package. Whatever it is, Ike promises that he will send a follow-up letter that will give the lucky recipient "instructions as to how to work with" it.

Let the reader begin to feel that the Reverend Ike has been unfairly singled out, let us proceed to examine the DM productions of other televangelists. It will be apparent that Ike's colorful packages are typical. In fact, the sharp-eyed observer may begin to wonder whether all of these DM slicksters retain the same communications consultant.

The Reverend Al (not to be confused with the Reverend Ike—Al's the one from Fresno with the "Prayer Family") sends a mailer in a tinted window envelope emblazoned with a photograph of the Reverend and the headline "Living On A Shoestring!" It should by now come as no great surprise that inside the envelope can be found a real shoestring. Next to it, a specially punched sheet shows an illustration of (What else?) the "Shoe of Faith." The recipient is to thread the laces through the little holes and check off the problems in his or her life. One reads, "Dear Lord, I don't have the money to pay my bills . . . this shoestring existence has got to go!" One then encloses "a beautiful gift from your heart." Beauty is, of course, in the eye of the beholder, so Reverend Al lets you know he finds \$10, \$20, \$25, or a "special tithe" especially beautiful.

Another mailing—perhaps the most astounding of them all—comes not from the Reverend Al but from his “Prayer Family,” or headquarters staff. It asks for \$30.00—one dollar for each year the Reverend Al and his wife, Sister Wilma, have shared wedded bliss—to send the loving and holy couple on a vacation! “There are so many deserving things we could do for them,” the letter explains in a naïvely charming approximation of English grammar and syntax, “but don’t you think it would be wonderful if we could send them to some place for a few days of good rest? They have been pushing themselves so hard for others. . . .”

Jimmy Swaggart, based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, takes a simpler approach. In a telegram-like piece headlined “High Priority,” he announces his declaration of “war.” After the computer-personalized greeting, Swaggart writes, “Jimmy Swaggart Ministries has declared war on Satan. . . . Due to a shortage of funds, this warfare against the enemy will be hindered. Without ‘ammunition’ from home, the big guns of the Gospel will soon fall silent.” Swaggart lets recipients choose their own level of giving, and responds to any gift by sending “a free cross and dove lapel pin.” Using the dove symbol in a declaration of war must be judged, if nothing else, a creative touch.

Ernest Angley in Akron, Ohio, is an old-fashioned faith-healer. He makes grandiose claims regarding his power to heal

#1. Lace up your Shoe of Faith below! Be sure to lace each hole. **#2. Say each special prayer binding our hearts together in Christian love. IMPORTANT! #3. Do not tie the shoestring... please, this is important... only lace it up!** **#4. Write in the lines your inner-most thoughts and feelings, and disappointments!** **your burdens, difficulties**

☐ Oh God, my nerves are constantly on edge and tied up in knots. I need deliverance from this worry and distress that torments me!

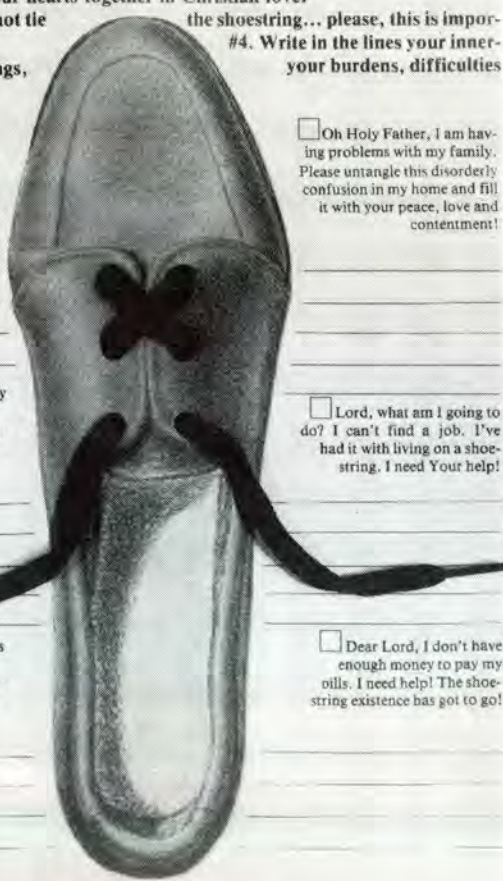
☐ Oh Holy Father, I am having problems with my family. Please untangle this disorderly confusion in my home and fill it with your peace, love and contentment!

☐ Dear Heavenly Father, my health is broken like a shoe-string. I am tired of weakness and suffering. I need your deliverance and healing!

☐ Lord, what am I going to do? I can't find a job. I've had it with living on a shoe-string. I need Your help!

☐ Oh Dear Jesus, my heart is breaking and I'm lonely and depressed over the loss or fear of losing a loved one. I need your comfort and help!

☐ Dear Lord, I don't have enough money to pay my bills. I need help! The shoe-string existence has got to go!



The Reverend Al's “Shoe of Faith.” Recipients are instructed to lace it up and check off their problems in the boxes provided.

the sick in the name of the Lord. So healing-oriented are his services that on a 1984 European tour Angley was arrested by officials in Munich, Germany, for practicing medicine without a license! Angley may come the closest to the Reverend Ike's combination of down-home sincerity, deliberate naivete, and avarice. One Angley mailer features a picture of Noah's Ark, inside which one is supposed to write the names of those among one's family and friends who are not yet saved. “PLEASE DO TAKE THE TIME TO DO THIS!” Angley thunders. “IT COULD MEAN HEAVEN FOR SOME OF YOUR LOST!”

The recipient is now physically involved. Here comes the pitch:

STEP NUMBER TWO: Make a blessing covenant pact with the Lord. Send you [*sic*] financial support seed faith and tell God you are going to send something every month to this Jesus ministry. Don't try to send more than you can afford, but as God blesses you, you can increase your amount as He leads you.

Don't think, “Lord, I have such a little to give that I am ashamed to send it.” My attitude about giving to God has always been: “If I give my best to God, then I can expect His best for me.” **DOING YOUR BEST IS ALL GOD EXPECTS!**

Angley devotes a great deal of prose—six paragraphs—to the need for the reader to sow the most generous possible “seed faith.” It is no surprise, then, that when we turn to the reply card, the recipient is permitted to choose the “seed faith” amount, from \$5 to \$500. Presumably, Angley could wax less eloquent about gift size if he simply took a page from Reverend Ike's book and specified the gift amount—thereby sparing his flock the agony of choice.

Another Angley classic asks the recipient to write down all his or her problems on a paper cross and mail it back. It hardly seems necessary to explain what *else* one is expected to enclose in addition to the paper cross! On his very next trip to Jerusalem, Angley pledges, he will have the paper cross stuffed into his pocket when he kneels to pray in the very tomb of Jesus, hallelujah. “I want to make certain you receive The Tomb Anointing!” he coaxes.

Oral Roberts also issued a mailer—indeed, a rather austere one—to promote his pending trip to the Holy Land. He asks recipients to list their unsaved loved ones so that he can pray for them when *he* prays on the very soil Christ trod. Perhaps so as not to stumble over the Reverend Angley, Roberts tells us he plans to fly to Bethlehem and “to kneel on that sacred spot where Mary gave miraculous birth to our Savior, the Holy Child Jesus.” Another Oral Roberts mailer is somewhat more complex—it includes plenty of color underlining and an autographed picture of Roberts himself. “I want you to have your miracle breakthrough so much that I'm going up in the Prayer Tower . . . to travail in prayer for you.” But Roberts will not travail alone. He asks each believer to send a snapshot of himself or herself that he can use as “a point of contact” during his prayers. Most readers have already guessed what is supposed to accompany the snapshot.

A very sophisticated Oral Roberts piece dated March 1985 solicits support for an ambitious, ultramodern “Healing Center.” He encloses a tiny bag of cement. “Partner,” he writes,

"return this cement bag to me with your Seed-Faith gift today. As we pour the piers [for the new building], we will combine your cement with the cement from my other Partners to symbolize our faith joining together for the great things God is going to bring to you through this Healing Center."

Roberts is not alone in the construction business. Pat Robertson in Virginia Beach is hard at work on Phase IV of his ambitious Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) Center project. Robertson will send a brand new teaching tape and the *CBN Ministry Handbook*, which is "filled with tested biblical solutions to life's deepest problems," to anyone who donates \$100 or more.

This mailing, with its textured-paper cover letter and paired four-color fliers (one describing the construction project and another describing the premiums) makes an impressive package. The real DM *putsch* came about a month later, when Robertson's flock received an *exact copy* of the letter. The word COPY was stamped in red at its top; and attached to its face with two strong staples was a yellow "message slip" with a pseudo-handwritten message from Robertson, begging those readers who didn't send \$100 the first time to buckle down and respond to this second mailing.

But perhaps the prize for unmitigated gall must go to Jim Whittington, a Greenville, North Carolina, evangelist. The very envelope, boldly emblazoned with the "handwritten" headline "You Were Chosen!!!" should tell the believer that this is no ordinary piece of junk mail. Indeed, it is very special junk mail—so special that Whittington begins by disparaging other DM-using evangelists who use word-processing to personalize their letters:

You see, I can write to you and call you by your name as I sometimes do; but anyone can write to you and use your name. But only a friend can write to you from their heart. . . .

Whittington is only warming up:

I can not choose the ones to answer the call in this letter. . . . Friend, those who are not chosen might not understand this letter at all. Some might read it and get mad. Some might read it and make fun. . . . It might fall into the hands of an unbeliever or a relative of someone who has passed away and they may turn it over to a TV reporter or newspaper or some agency to get some publicity or get me attacked again and talked about.

What is Whittington worried about? Read on.

Are you one of the 99 to send a special one time gift of \$1,000.00 to help defeat the financial attack the devil has made against me and this ministry. [Sic.]

Your eyes have not deceived you. Jim Whittington wants one thousand dollars. "Has God chosen you?" he writes. "Do you fill [*sic*] a tug at your heart strings telling you that you must do whatever it takes?" Whittington wants exactly 99 peo-

ACTION TAB

To: CBN Partners Date: 10/7/85
From: Pat Robertson
☐ YES - I AM INTERESTED ☐ FOR YOUR INFORMATION
☒ YES - I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ACTION ☒ I WANT IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUESTED

COMMENTS: Here is a copy of the letter I sent you several weeks ago. The steel for the CBN classroom building is about to go up. We need your help. If you have already sent your gift of \$100, thank you. If not, please let me hear from you today.

CBN

Much more remained to be built. But now I was hesitating. Economic times were hard. It didn't seem wise.

But the Lord's voice seemed insistent: "Why are you so timid? Finish CBN Center!" There was no room for hesitation and doubt. There was only one option -- move forward!

In rapid succession we began to build Phases II and III -- the CBN University Library Building and the World Outreach Support Center. And again, God poured out His favor. CBN continued to grow dramatically -- and so did CBN University!

In 1984 we opened the CBN University Library. Just last month we opened the World Outreach Support Center to undergird the phenomenal expansion of our global ministry.

God has privileged us to affect the lives of millions by carrying the Gospel over nearly 200 broadcast stations in America and in some 60 nations worldwide.

He has supplied emergency relief through Operation Blessing to more than five million people this year alone.

And He has brought CBN University from nothing into what we hope will become one of the most significant institutions of learning in the world.

earnest prayer, I sensed it, clearly and unmistakably:

Don't you finish CBN Center? What you need?"

mean. We had begun building Plan first laid out in 1975. A school to train future leaders would come and find

partners. God's favor of CBN Center was complete. A Gospel to much of the world, already packed with students.

ple to send in \$1,000: "I can only take 99. Anything less will not please God. Anything more must be turned away. You must send that \$1000.00 now."

One thousand dollars is a lot to give, but not the way Whittington sees it:

You may feel like you can't but you can. The Americans on that cruise ship [an apparent reference to the *Achille Lauro*] paid more than \$1000.00. Many people have paid \$500.00 for a ticket to see a world series game. . . . Take it out of savings. (Banks are failing every day anyway.) Borrow it. (We borrow for everything else in this world.) . . . The chain must not be broken. As soon as I receive your prove-God offering of \$1000.00, I will send you your number and you will know what position in the chain you hold. Don't let the chain have a missing link. . . . Remember there's just so many that can get in. Don't wait too late and live to regret it.

What do these mailings have in common? What makes them work? (We must conclude from the fact that so many televangelists structure their mailings so similarly that this DM technique is quite effective.)

First, most—if not all—of the pieces use one or more "personalizing" techniques, from simulated felt-tip underlining to injecting the recipient's name into the copy. Some users employ "felt-tipping" to preselect options, such as the amount of a gift—effectively creating the feeling of a decision opportunity where none really exists.

Second, most of the mailings include a novelty item, such as the Reverend Al's shoestring or Oral Roberts's bag of cement. In the trade, such add-ons are known as "unordered

merchandise.” Much of the unordered merchandise used in fundamentalist DM mailers is intended to serve as the focus of physical activity to involve the recipient, who is asked to do something with the novelty and return it with the offering. In the case of the Oral Roberts snapshot, the novelty was intended as a symbol of the action the recipient was asked to undertake.

Third, the mailings generally contain thinly veiled promises of awesome rewards awaiting those who respond in time. Ministers who rely heavily on faith-healing, such as Angley and Oral Roberts, speak fuzzily of diseases cured and a return to well-being. Others hint—in the case of the Reverend Al’s shoestring mailer, rather directly—at miraculous rewards of prosperity. At other times, writers rely on promises of undefined miracles. This quote is from Oral Roberts’s “trip to Bethlehem” mailer:

There on my knees I’m going to raise your name and needs to the Lord and believe him to give you the miracle breakthrough you’ve got to have—on or before Christmas.

Here’s what I want you to do QUICKLY:

FIRST. Make up your mind this won’t be just another Christmas. Start dreaming right now you’re going to get your biggest miracle.

Careful reading of these paragraphs will show what Roberts has really promised his readers: nothing. But the structure—with sinewy, forceful, and memorable phrases strung like beads between the obfuscations—is clearly designed to impress a less critical reader as a promise: *Do what I ask and send in your dollars, and I WILL get you a miracle from the Lord.*

Fourth and most important, all the mailings conclude with a plea for money. In very few cases is the appeal phrased in terms like “We need your help. Give what you can.” Specific or substantial amounts are the goal, and the mailers go to great lengths to create the feeling in the recipients that they will get their money’s worth. From the complexity of the mailings themselves, to the layers of activity that are to accompany the donation (checking off boxes, writing down names, performing prescribed rituals upon the unordered merchandise, and so on), to the tangible or intangible items one receives in return (from “your greatest miracle” to a set of teaching tapes), every effort is made to make the recipient feel his or her donation is but a single element of a vast and complex web. It is very much like the negotiation and performance of a contract.

Obviously, the faithful who receive these mailers do not perceive the appeal for money they all contain as detracting from their supposedly religious purpose. Anyone who chooses to support a cause-oriented organization understands the need for periodic contributions to support the organization’s operations. But believers in these televangelists are willing to be told how much to give, and in many other ways tolerate a level of pushiness (for lack of a better word) that no secular organization would dare use in its appeals. To some degree, televangelists rely on sheer bluster to force reader acceptance. When you’re offering your readers not only eternal salvation but also

“Televangelists enjoy the same advantages in their use of the mails as they exploit in other phases of their operations: the enormity and inherent ambiguity of their promises, and the condition, seemingly analogous to diplomatic immunity, that attends upon their status as men of the cloth.”

future prosperity and cures for disease, you can afford to be more direct in your appeals than, say, the Cousteau Society.

But even the men and women behind these mailers feel the need for circumlocution. The donations are called “prove-God offerings,” “blessing covenant pacts,” or “seed-faiths.” The term *seed-faith* is most prevalent; several of the DM packages I sampled used it. Oral Roberts provides a fascinating glimpse into the pastoral theology that underlies the term and apparently makes it a successful cover for direct and pointed fundraising:

I know this: God cannot order your miracle harvest until your seed is in His hand.

Have you ever given a sacrificial seed to Jesus at Christmas? Well, I’m led to offer you the opportunity to plant a seed out of your need—a seed against your problem—a seed to empower your life with your own personal Christmas miracle breakthrough. You can’t buy it—but the Bible teaches you can Seed-Faith for it.

Remember this, every person who got their miracle at that first Christmas gave God their best, including gifts of money.

Obviously, the “seed-faith” concept effectively masks or sanctifies the essentially pecuniary nature of many of these mailings. Secure in their faith, the recipients fail to recognize when their spiritual shepherds have shifted their allegiances to another, older God—one we know today as Mammon.

To the sophisticated reader, these mailings are transparently—and offensively—acquisitive in their outlook. They are every bit as disturbing and absurd as the impassioned pleas for support most of us have heard or seen on episodes of these preachers’ broadcast ministries—but with the added element of hard copy, which allows us to hold their ravings in our hands and contemplate them at leisure. Studying these cynical circulars, one can feel only pity for the hapless individuals—trapped by loneliness, limited intellectual horizons, or the strictures of a misdirected faith—who are their intended targets. Those who write and design these mailers betray a numbing confidence that they can tell their flocks virtually anything, however manifestly self-aggrandizing, and tell them it came from God—and get results.

This point cannot be overemphasized: These mailings work insidiously well. Since professional religious in the United States need not release their financial statements to anyone, there is no way to quantify the returns these mailings bring in. But practical wisdom assures us that such complex and relatively expensive mailings would not be used time and time again, and

would not be designed so similarly by so many media ministries, unless they represented a proven and mature technology for making money. Nor can we be too far wrong in concluding that the people from whom these gross appeals are best tailored to extract funds—the desperate, the uncritical, the lonely and undereducated—are the very persons who can least spare those funds.

Obviously, no ordinary cause organization or profit-making venture could long employ such openly manipulative strategies in its mailings without running afoul of the United States Postal Service, consumer agencies, or the Direct Marketing Association (a Washington-based trade association whose attempts to police the DM industry have been relatively successful of late). But televangelists enjoy the same advantages in their use of the mails as they exploit in other phases of their operations: the enormity and inherent ambiguity of their promises and the condition, seemingly analogous to diplomatic immunity, that attends upon their status as men of the cloth.

“Those who write and design these mailers betray a numbing confidence that they can tell their flocks virtually anything, however manifestly self-aggrandizing, and tell them it came from God—and get results.”

Compare televangelists with other direct marketers. K-Tel promised only that their Veg-O-Matic would slice, dice, and otherwise relieve kitchen drudgery. The Sharper Image promises only that its high-tech gadgets will work as their manufacturers claim. Almost all televangelists offer salvation, whatever that is; some go on to include healings, a restoration of well-being, and future prosperity. Promises of this nature powerfully resist verification in your garden-variety product-testing laboratory.

Before we conclude our examination of fundamentalist DM practices, it may be enlightening to examine three of the forty articles in the Direct Mail Association's Guidelines for Ethical Business Practices. It is doubtful that any of the telepreachers whose work we have examined could survive judgment by these principles:

Article #1

All offers should be clear, honest and complete so that the consumer may know the exact nature of what is being offered. . . . Before publication of an offer, direct marketers should be prepared to substantiate any claims or offers made.

Advertisements or specific claims which are untrue, misleading, deceptive, fraudulent or unjustly disparaging of competitors should not be used.

One Reverend Al order-form says, “After checking or writing your most urgent need to God, read it again as a prayer to Him. Begin Praising and Thanking God with all sincerity for the answers you're about to receive.” Is that “clear, honest, and complete” in any but the most pedantic sense?

An Oral Roberts piece shrills, “You need a miracle breakthrough this very month, and I can help you get it.” Is the Reverend Roberts prepared to substantiate that claim?

Or reflect on the Reverend Ike's colossal pronouncement.

When I answer your letter and send you this “GOD'S GOODIE” package, you are going to receive the answer as to how to get rid of bad luck, evil, setbacks, hardships, and all the other things that cause you to be unhappy. . . .

It would be interesting to see this claim judged on the basis of DMA's “untrue, misleading, deceptive . . .” language.

Article #25

Direct marketers should only offer merchandise when it is on hand or when there is a reasonable expectation of its receipt.

It would be challenging indeed for the Reverend Al to prove what solutions to “shoestring problems” he really has on hand, or for Ernest Angley to substantiate to the satisfaction of a court that he has truly stocked enough Tomb Anointings to go around. After hundreds of years, philosophy has finally and all but unanimously ruled as to whether there is a “reasonable expectation” of receiving the kind of “merchandise” televangelists offer. And the answer is no.

Article #26

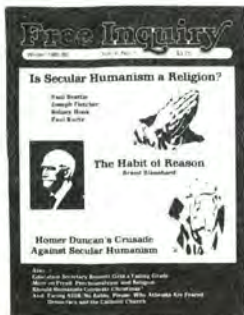
Merchandise should not be shipped without having first received a customer's permission. The exceptions are samples or gifts clearly marked as such, and merchandise mailed by a charitable organization soliciting contributions, as long as all items are sent with a clear and conspicuous statement informing the recipient of an unqualified right to treat the product as a gift and to do with it as the recipient sees fit, at no cost or obligation to the recipient.

Some DM-using evangelists could be plunged into very real legal hot water on this point if prosecutors in any state having similar laws on the books were so inclined. Though the “unordered merchandise” is typically of negligible value (e.g., Oral Roberts's bag of cement, the Reverend Ike's carpet scraps, fabric swatches, and napkins), the copy usually allows recipients very little freedom as to what to do with the merchandise and seldom, if ever, refers to the enclosures as gifts. No, the Reverend Al wants his shoelace back, laced through the Shoe of Faith but not tied. Oral Roberts needs that pinch of cement back so he will have enough to complete his multimillion-dollar building project. And one quails at the thought of the retributions the Reverend Ike might call down upon the miscreants who send in the required eighteen-dollar donation without returning his prayer rug.

To the educated reader who is fortunate enough to be situated outside these preachers' arena of belief, most of the mailings appear little more than humorous. But the laughter is muted when we realize that these mailings must be working—and when we contemplate the type of believer who must therefore constitute the rank and file of those forces. ●

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The Effect of Intelligence on Religious Faith

Burnham P. Beckwith

In the long war between religion and science, religionists have often asserted or implied that religious believers are more intelligent than non-believers, and the latter have often asserted or implied the opposite but, until the invention and wide use of scientific intelligence tests and public opinion polls, there was no scientific method of settling this dispute. Since 1900 a growing mass of scientific data relevant to this dispute has been produced, but I have been unable to find any summary of this data, or indeed any book, essay, chapter, or article on the effect of intelligence on religious faith and/or behavior. I believe that this article may be the first ever written on this subject and, in any case, by far the most comprehensive.

Since the United States is a predominantly Christian country, this study is largely of the Christian faith but includes some dogmas accepted also by Jews and Muslims. As used here, the term *religious faith* denotes belief in basic Christian dogmas, including belief in a personal God who observes human conduct, answers prayers, and rewards or punishes human beings in this world and/or in an imagined other world. Such religious faith declines when believers become less firm in their belief or when they cease to believe in one or more basic religious dogmas.

Although American intelligence researchers have tested very large numbers of people each year for more than eighty years, and although they have repeatedly correlated intelligence-test scores with race, sex, occupation, age, political opinion, psychological traits, etc., relatively little research on the correlation between IQ scores and religious faith or behavior has been done and the results of such research have been virtually ignored by both religionists and those who have written about intelligence tests. I have been unable to find a single book on intelligence tests that reviews, or even refers to, such research results. For instance, the 1,040-page *Handbook of Human*

Intelligence (1982), edited by Robert Sternberg, contains no reference to religion in its index or table of contents.

There are several possible reasons for the long neglect of this intelligence-faith relationship, a subject of wide and often intense interest. First, some people suspect that intelligence tests do not measure native intelligence. But this suspicion has not prevented the publication of many books and articles on the relationship of intelligence to race, sex, occupation, age, etc. Second, there is the suspicion that religious faith and/or behavior cannot be measured, but this suspicion has not prevented the publication of many articles on the growth or decline of religious faith and/or behavior. The only remaining plausible reason is that researchers know or suspect that a comprehensive review of the relevant data will yield a very unpopular conclusion, namely, that nonreligious persons are more intelligent than religious persons.

In order to determine the correlation between native intelligence and religious faith, one must measure both intelligence and religiosity. Several well-known, long-used intelligence tests are available, but no such widely accepted measure of religious faith is available. For this reason, researchers on intelligence and religiosity have used many different and imperfect measures of religious faith.

My primary purpose in this article is to survey studies on the correlation between intelligence and religious faith, but I report some studies of the relationship of intelligence to measures of religiosity that include religious behavior or measure religious behavior only. I do so because there is a high correlation between religious faith and religious behavior.

This survey of the scientific, quantitative literature on the relationship of native intelligence to Christian religious faith in the United States is divided into five main parts: (1) a review of studies of the correlation between individual student intelligence-test scores and religiosity test scores; (2) a review of relevant student body comparisons; (3) a review of the religiosity scores of geniuses; (4) a review of the religiosity scores of highly successful persons; and (5) a review of Gallup polls. I also comment briefly on the literature on the effects of education on religious faith.

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The Correlation Between Student Intelligence and Faith

The best way to determine the correlation between intelligence and religious faith is to give individual intelligence and religiosity tests to representative samples of the general adult population. This has never been done. However, researchers have obtained and compared results of a variety of individual intelligence and religiosity tests of sixteen groups of students. In this section I review all such studies known to me.

1. *Howells, 1927*—So far as I am aware, the first scientist to investigate the correlation between intelligence and degree of religious faith was Thomas H. Howells, a professor of psychology at the University of Iowa. In April 1926, he tested 461 students in elementary psychology classes on their acceptance or rejection of twelve religious statements (ten items of faith, one on respect for preachers, and one on enjoyment of sermons). He then used available composite scores on the Thorndike Intelligence Test, Part I, and on the Iowa Comprehension Test to correlate religiosity with intelligence. He reported a negative coefficient of correlation of $-.36 \pm .026$, which means that the degree of religiosity varied inversely and substantially with intelligence.

Howells segregated the 36 religiously most “radical” students and the 34 religiously most conservative students, and determined the mean percentile composite intelligence score for each group. He reported a mean intelligence score of 72.8 for the radicals and 44.5 for the conservatives, the difference being 6.14 times the probable error.¹

Howells also used other available data on the intelligence of his students—college grade points, college entrance tests, his own “test of rational judgment,” maze-problem scores, and other test results—to determine their correlation with his religiosity scores. He reported that “in all the tests of intellectual ability the typical conservative always made the poorer score . . . that in most of the tests the differences are large enough practically to guarantee” that they are significant, and that “the different bits of supporting evidence are mutually supporting” and “constitute fairly convincing evidence that” the religiously conservative students “are, in general, relatively inferior in intellectual ability.”

2. *Carlson, 1933*—The next scientific study of the correlation between individual intelligence and religious faith was conducted by Hilding B. Carlson among seniors at the University of Chicago in 1931–32. He used the Thurstone Reality of God Test (scale 22A) to measure religious faith and compared the results with intelligence-test scores. Only 215 of the 500 seniors returned completed forms, which may have biased the results. He reported an inverse correlation ($-.191 \pm .059$) between conservative attitude toward God, on the one hand, and intelligence, on the other. In his words, “there is a tendency for the more intelligent undergraduate to be sympathetic toward . . . atheism,” and this conclusion “coincides with the conclusions of most other investigators,” whom he did not name.²

Carlson also used the Thurstone test on attitudes toward birth control, and this enabled him to determine a positive correlation of $.211 \pm .064$ between approval of birth control and intelligence test scores. Since disapproval of birth control is a dogma of the Catholic church and many Protestant sects,

this correlation supports the conclusion that the amount of religious faith varies inversely with intelligence.

3. *Franzblau, 1934*—Professor Abraham N. Franzblau of Hebrew Union College gave a Terman intelligence test and a religious ideas test to 354 Jewish children age 10 to 16, and reported an inverse correlation of $-.15$ between his religious and intelligence-test scores. He also gave a Terman mental-age test and found an inverse correlation of $-.35$ between these scores and the religious-test scores.³ Franzblau summarized the

“Relatively little research on the correlation between IQ scores and religious faith or behavior has been done, and the results of such research have been virtually ignored by both religionists and those who have written about intelligence tests. . . . Researchers know or suspect that a comprehensive review of the relevant data will yield a very unpopular conclusion, namely, that nonreligious persons are more intelligent than religious persons.”

results of the previous studies by Howells and Carlson and asserted that his results “apparently confirm their findings.”

4. *Symington, 1935*—In 1935 Thomas A. Symington published a monograph, *Religious Liberals and Conservatives*, in which he reported on a recent scientific study of, among other things, the correlation between intelligence and religious faith. He used a YMCA “Test of Religious Thinking,” consisting of 100 questions in nine groups, most but not all of which involved belief in religious doctrines, to determine the degree of religious liberalism of some 400 young people in several colleges and church groups. He then gave all of them either an Otis or a Thurstone Test of Mental Ability—he claimed they were very similar—and determined the correlations between intelligence and religious scores separately for six different groups—three for respondents with a conservative background and three for those with a liberal background. He reported that “there is a constant positive relation in all the groups between liberal religious thinking and mental ability, but the correlations are much larger in the groups from a liberal background than in the groups from a conservative background.” He added that “there is also a constant positive relation between liberal scores and intelligence in each of the nine parts of the Test of Religious Thinking,” including all five parts devoted to questions of doctrinal faith.⁴

5. *Vernon Jones, 1938*—During the years 1930 to 1935, Vernon Jones of Clark University gave three religious tests and an intelligence test to 381 students, including all freshmen in four class years. He used Thurstone-Chave tests on attitude toward God (influence on conduct), on the reality of God, and on attitude towards the church. All students were given the American Council Psychological Examination, which measured scholastic aptitude or intelligence.

Jones concluded that there was “a slight tendency for high

intelligence and liberal attitudes to go together." He reported positive correlations of + .20 (conduct), + .28 (reality), and + .23 (church) between intelligence and liberal religious scores for 268 freshmen. For 100 seniors, the correlations were + .20, +.11, and + .23. He claimed that all these correlations were "reliable statistically."⁵

6. *Gilliland, 1940*—In 1940 psychologist A. R. Gilliland published a report of his study of Northwestern students. He gave two Thurstone Attitude Toward God tests (forms A and B) to 339 students and compared the results with the students' intelligence-test scores. He found "little or no relationship between intelligence and attitude toward God."⁶

7. *Gragg, 1942*—In 1942 Donald B. Gragg of Hardin-Simmons University published a report of his study of the "religious attitudes" of 438 students in three small denominational colleges in the southwestern part of the Bible Belt. He used Thurstone attitude scales, and also obtained American Council on Education (ACE) psychological-test scores for 100 freshmen at one college. He reported an inverse correlation ($-.13 \pm .07$) between ACE intelligence scores and Thurstone "reality of God" scores for these 100 freshmen.⁷

8. *Brown and Lowe, 1951*—In their 1948 study of 613 male and female liberal arts students at the University of Denver, D. G. Brown and W. L. Lowe determined and segregated those students "who strongly accepted" and those "who strongly opposed" traditional religious doctrines, and gave them the ACE Psychological Examination, 1945 edition, an intelligence test. They reported that "the mean ACE scores of 119 for Non-Believers was considerably and significantly higher than the mean scores of 98 and 100 for Believers and Bible students respectively. . . . The mean percentile rank of Non-Believers was 80, while that of Believers and Bible students clustered around 50. The difference of 27 and 30 percentile points approximated the difference reported by Howells," which Brown and Lowe reported was 25 percentile points.⁸ They claimed that their findings "strongly corroborate those of Howells."

9. *Argyle, 1958*—In his book *Religious Behavior* (1958), Michael Argyle briefly reviewed the literature on the correlation between student intelligence and religious faith and concluded that "although intelligent children grasp religious concepts earlier, they are also the first to doubt the truth of religion, and intelligent students are much less likely to accept orthodox beliefs. . . ." He explained this by asserting that "intelligent people are less amenable to social pressure," which implies that there is social pressure to profess orthodox religious beliefs (p. 96). He failed to suggest a more important reason, namely, that religious beliefs may seem to be irrational.

Argyle noted that, while the above studies apply only to students, similar conclusions "may hold for adults as well, since authoritarianism (which correlates with religious conservatism) is correlated with IQ to the extent of $-.2$ to $-.5$."⁹

10. *Hadden, 1963*—In 1963 sociologist Jeffrey K. Hadden (University of Wisconsin) reported on a survey of 261 University of Wisconsin seniors who were given an unnamed and undescribed religiosity test. He reported that "there is no correlation between grade-point average and the conventional religiosity index."¹⁰ In fact, he found an insignificant $-.03$

correlation.

Since grade-point averages are closely correlated with intelligence scores, this is an anomalous finding. I suspect that Hadden found no significant correlation because GPA scores are an imperfect measure of intelligence and/or because his religiosity index covered religious behavior as well as religious belief. Such belief varies with intelligence much more than does behavior.

Hadden explained his unusual finding by the fact that his seniors were homogenous in intelligence, having "been selected on the basis of intellectual performance."

11. *Young, Dustin, and Holtzman, 1966*—In 1958 and 1964 Wayne H. Holtzman, Robert K. Young, and their associates at the University of Texas used a 23-item questionnaire to measure "attitudes toward organized religion" among 1,074 students. Their questionnaire consisted of 23 statements and allowed five alternative reactions to each statement (ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"). Possible scores ranged from 0, the most negative attitude, to 92, the most positive. They also determined grade-point averages and calculated mean scores for each of five groups—below C, C+, B-, B+, and A-.

They reported that in 1958 the religious scores varied directly with the grade-point scores, but only very slightly—from 60.6 to 63.0—and all of this variation occurred in the first step, from "below C" (30 students) to "C+" (158 students). In 1964, however, there was a much larger and more continuous inverse correlation between the religious and grade-point scores. The religious scores fell continuously from 57.0 for "below C" students to 51.6 for the 102 B+ students, and then rose to 53.9 for 39 A- students. The average religious score for the B+ and A- students was 52.2, compared with 56.8 for the C and C+ groups combined.¹¹

12. *Trent, 1967*—In 1963 James W. Trent polled 1,400 college seniors in more than 100 schools in 16 communities in the Midwest, California, and Pennsylvania, where they had been studied as high-school seniors. The college seniors were tested for both religious liberalism and academic aptitude. He reported that 712 non-Catholic seniors rated "high" in ability had a mean score of 50.2 on religious liberalism while 65 such seniors who rated "low" in ability had a mean score of 47.3, which indicated that the most able were the least religious.¹²

Unfortunately, Trent's high-ability group included 64 percent of all his subjects. If he had selected the 10 percent or 20 percent who were the most able, the difference in the religious scores might have been much greater.

13. *Plant and Minium, 1967*—In 1960 C. W. Plant gave California Psychological Inventory intelligence-tests and Allport-Vernon-Lindsay religious tests to 926 male applicants for admission to six public junior colleges in California. In 1962 all were retested.

In 1967 Plant and E. W. Minium analyzed data collected by Plant and another researcher. They calculated separate mean religious scores for the 228 students who ranked in the upper 25 percent, and for the 216 students who ranked in the lower 25 percent, on the basis of their intelligence tests. They reported that the more intelligent students were less religious, both before entering college (religious scores 38.3 compared with 39.0) and

after two years of college (38.6 and 38.9) The most intelligent students were most influenced by their college experience.¹³

14. *Wuthnow, 1978*—From 1970 to 1972 the Institute for Research in Social Behavior (University of California, Berkeley) polled about 2,000 freshmen and senior students at Berkeley on their religious views and also obtained the entering student aptitude test (SAT) scores on each student. In 1978 Robert Wuthnow published a report on the relationship of the religious views to the SAT scores of 532 of these students (all males). He found that, of the students he classified as Christians, only 37 percent scored above average on the verbal SAT, while 58 percent of the apostates and 44 percent of the nonreligious did so. On the math SAT, the figures were 45 percent, 58 percent, and 53 percent, respectively.¹⁴ These data support the conclusion that intelligence varies inversely with amount of religious faith.

15. *Hastings and Hoge, 1967, 1974*—In both 1967 and 1974, Philip K. Hastings and Dean Hoge polled about 200 Williams College students on their religious beliefs and related attitudes, and correlated the results with data on the students' scholastic aptitude scores. They found no significant correlation and reported that this finding was new. "Virtually all studies done prior to World War II found significant correlations between higher test scores and religious liberalism, often as high as .2 or .3."¹⁵

16. *Poythress, 1975*—In 1972 Richard A. Hunt argued that earlier conclusions concerning the correlation between intelligence and religiosity were "at best meaningless and, at most, dangerous and misleading" because they failed to give due weight to the views of pro-religious, nonfundamentalist believers.

To test this hypothesis, Norman G. Poythress of the University of Texas polled some 200 of his introductory psychology students on their religious beliefs, classified them according to the degree and kind of their religious faith, and then determined the correlations between SAT scores, a rough measure of intelligence, and religious faith for each of his eight classes of respondents. He concluded that his results did not support Hunt's charges but instead confirmed the conclusion of nearly all previous researchers. He reported that the 33 pollees he classified as "strongly antireligious" (Group E) had a 12 percent higher mean SAT score (1148) than that (1022) for all 139 religious pollees (Groups, A, B, C, D). The SAT scores for the 15 "moderately antireligious" (1119) and the 24 "slightly antireligious" respondents (1108) were also higher than that for the religious ones.¹⁶

17. *Wiebe and Fleck, 1980*—In 1980 Ken F. Wiebe and J. R. Fleck of the Rosemead Graduate School of Professional Psychology published a study of personality correlates of 158 male and female Canadian university students. They used questionnaires to classify the students as intrinsically religious (fundamentalists), extrinsically religious (liberals), and nonreligious, and gave them intelligence tests. They reported that "nonreligious S's tended to be strongly intelligent" and "more intelligent than religious S's." They also found that religious liberals resembled the nonreligious subjects much more closely than they resembled the religious conservatives.¹⁷

I have now reviewed sixteen different studies, following

"Students become less religious as they proceed through college, probably in part because average IQ rises."

Howells, of the relationship between individual student intelligence and religiosity, all but three of which (Gilliland, Hadden, Hastings) support the conclusion that intelligence varies inversely, but far less than proportionally, with some measure of religiosity. Unfortunately, no researcher has ever tried to replicate Howells's brilliant pioneer study. Instead, each subsequent researcher used a new and less perfect methodology.

These sixteen studies are more directly relevant to the relationship of intelligence to religiosity than any other studies, both because they dealt with the correlation between *individual* intelligence and *individual* religiosity, and because they were the least affected by differences in the amount of education. In each study, all students had about the same number of years of education. When individuals differ widely in amount of education, these differences have marked effects upon their degree of religiosity.

Since there have been so few such directly relevant studies, especially in recent years, it is worthwhile to review some less relevant studies.

Student-Body Comparisons

Several studies have found that the students in the most prestigious colleges are much less religious than those in less prestigious schools. Since the average native intelligence of students in the best schools is higher than that of students in other schools, it is reasonable to attribute most of the differences in amount of religious faith to differences in native intelligence.

1. *Goldsen's Cornell Values Study, 1960*—In 1952 a Cornell University research group, led by Rose K. Goldsen, conducted a survey of values among some 4,800 male students in eleven American colleges and universities. This study included questions on religion. The answers revealed that the amounts of both religious belief and religious behavior varied inversely with the quality of the school. For instance, the percent of students who claimed to "believe in a Divine God" rose from 30 percent at Harvard to 45 percent at the University of Michigan and 63 percent at the University of North Carolina, as shown in Table 1.¹⁸

Table 1

Student Belief in a Divine God, 1952

	%		%
Harvard	30	Wesleyan	43
UCLA	32	Michigan	45
Dartmouth	35	Fisk	60
Yale	36	Texas	62
Cornell	42	N. Carolina	68
Wayne	43		

2. *National Review Study, 1970*—The conclusion that student religious belief varies inversely with the quality of the students and the school was again confirmed by a twelve-school survey of student belief among sophomores, juniors, and seniors conducted by the conservative *National Review*, from 1969 to 1970. Some of the findings of this poll (*NR*, June 13, 1971, p. 650) are shown in Table 2.

	%		%
Reed	15	Yale	42
Brandeis	25	Howard	47
Sarah Lawrence	28	Indiana	57
Williams	36	Davidson	59
Stanford	41	S. Carolina	65
Boston Univ.	41	Marquette	77

Some of these differences in religious faith are due to causes other than differences in IQ and education—for instance, to the proportions of Jews and Catholics in the student body—but differences in native intelligence are probably the major cause.

3. *Caplovitz and Sherrow, 1977*—In the years 1961 to 1963 the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) polled some 34,000 college seniors in many different U.S. colleges and included questions on both the students' religious identification and that of their parents. In 1977 David Caplovitz and Fred Sherrow published an analysis of the apostasy rates revealed by this NORC survey. They reported that apostasy rates rose continuously from 5 percent for "low" ranked schools, to 8 percent for "medium low," to 10 percent for "medium high," and to 17 percent for "high" ranked schools—Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Berkeley, etc.¹⁹

4. *Niemi, Ross, and Alexander, 1978*—In 1978 R. G. Niemi, R. D. Ross, and J. Alexander published a study of a representative sample of college students in each of a variety of schools, including "nine elite institutions." They reported that, in these elite schools, "organized religion was judged important" by only 26 percent of the students, compared with 44 percent for all college students. Moreover, only 24 percent of those in elite schools "felt that abortion is morally wrong," while the figure for all students polled was 43 percent.²⁰

I have now reviewed four different studies comparing different college and university student bodies on the basis of average religiosity and average intellectual quality. All studies found that religiosity tends to vary inversely with the intellectual quality of the student body as a group. This unanimous finding strongly supports the conclusion that, among college students, intelligence varies inversely with religiosity.

Studies of Very-High-IQ Groups

I turn now to those studies of the religiosity of persons belonging to other groups with very high minimum and average IQs. The mean IQ for the subjects covered here is probably well

over 150.

1. *Terman, 1959*—In 1922 Lewis M. Terman, the intelligence-test pioneer at Stanford University, began a still-continuing study of a group of very gifted (IQ 140+) students, then in high school. In a 1959 book, *The Gifted Group at Mid-Life* (pp. 116-117), he classified his subjects into four groups according to their religious inclination—strong, moderate, little, and none at all. He reported that only 10 percent of the men and 18 percent of the women had a "strong" religious inclination, while 62 percent of the men and 57 percent of the women claimed "little" religious inclination or "none at all" (28 percent and 23 percent).

A 1976 Gallup poll allowed four similar choices and found that 66 percent of male adults claimed that religion is "very important" to them, and only 5 percent that it is "not at all important."

2. *Warren and Heist, 1960*—In 1956 Jonathan R. Warren and Paul A. Heist (both of UC, Berkeley) gave personality tests, including the Allport-Vernon-Lindsay (AVL) religious scale, to about 450 National Merit Scholars (average IQ, 150) and about 450 near-winners (average IQ, 130). They reported that these gifted high-school seniors "of both sexes score as high on the religious scale (male, 41.7; female, 46.5) as do any of the groups used here for comparison," namely Berkeley freshmen, Michigan State University freshmen, and "other" college students.²¹

They apparently recognized that their finding was inconsistent with most previous relevant findings, but they did not report these findings or try to explain the conflict with them. This conflict may be partly due to the fact that they compared high-school seniors with college students, to the fact that IQ is only one of several criteria for selecting National Merit Scholarship winners and near-winners, to defects of the AVL religious scale, and/or to other defects in their research methods.

It is possible that those who selected National Merit Scholars gave significant weight, consciously or unconsciously, to degree of religious faith. According to Warren and Heist, the selectors considered "motivation, breadth of interests, accomplishments, personality, and leadership potential," in addition to scholastic-aptitude-test scores.

It is unfortunate that Warren and Heist did not report separate average religious scores for the NMS winners (average IQ, 150), the near-winners (average IQ, 130), and the average eighteen-year-old (IQ, 100).

3. *Southern and Plant, 1968*—In 1968 Mara L. Southern and Walter T. Plant published a study of 42 male and 30 female U.S. members of Mensa—mean age, 36, mean IQ, 170+, mean education, 15.7 years—who had taken the Allport-Vernon-Lindsay test of personal values (AVL). They reported that on the AVL religious scale the Mensa males' mean score was 27.9, and the female mean, 31.3, far below the Warren-Heist AVL norm of 40.0 for college students, which implies that these American Mensa members were much less religious in belief than the typical American college alumnus or adult.²²

It is noteworthy that these Mensa AVL religious scores were far below those reported by Warren and Heist for NMS winners and near winners, probably chiefly because their mean IQ was much higher.

As previously explained, since so few researchers have studied the correlation between IQ scores and religiosity, it is worth examining studies that reveal the relationship between average group religiosity scores and factors positively correlated with IQ scores. Success or achievement in life is one such factor, and the correlation between such success and religiosity has been studied by several researchers. A review of their studies follows. It includes all such studies known to me, except those of Professor James H. Leuba, which I reported in detail in my Winter 1981/82 FREE INQUIRY article, "The Effect of Education on Religious Faith." Leuba found that eminent U.S. scientists were much less religious than other U.S. scientists, who in turn were far less religious than other U.S. adults.

1. *Ament, 1927*—In a 1926 *Scribner's Magazine* article, C. C. Little (president, University of Michigan) reported on the results of a check of certain persons listed in *Who's Who in America*. He found that "Unitarians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Universalists, and Presbyterians are . . . far more numerous in *Who's Who* than would be expected on the basis of the population which they form. Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics are distinctly less numerous. . . ."²³

Since persons whose names appear in *Who's Who* may be assumed to have an average IQ score far above that of other persons, and since Unitarians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Universalists, and Presbyterians are more liberal in their religious beliefs than Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics, Little's data suggest that religious liberals are more intelligent than religious conservatives.

In order to check Little's finding, William S. Ament of Scripps College reviewed the latest *Who's Who in America* data on 2,000 listed persons (10 percent of the total) and determined the relative frequency of such persons for each of twelve denominations. His findings confirmed Little's conclusion. He reported that, in proportion to number, the liberal sects have supplied many more individuals in *Who's Who* than the conservative sects. For instance, he found that Unitarians, the least religious, were more than forty times as numerous in *Who's Who* as in the U.S. population.²⁴

2. *Lehman and Witty, 1931*—To further check Little's finding, Harvey C. Lehman (Ohio University) and Paul A. Witty (Northwestern) identified 1,189 scientists listed both in *Who's Who* (1926-27) and as eminent in *American Men of Science* (1927). Only 25 percent of these eminent scientists, and 50 percent of all those listed in this *Who's Who*, reported their religious denomination in *Who's Who*, although *Who's Who* had specifically asked them to report "religious denomination (if any)." Since 97 percent of U.S. adults claimed a religious affiliation in 1953, the 25 percent figure for these eminent scientists suggests that they were far less religious than the average American adult.

Moreover, Lehman and Witty reported that those "who give information regarding church affiliation are associated in most instances with the relatively liberal denominations." For instance, they found that Unitarians were 81.4 times as numerous among these eminent scientists as non-Unitarians.²⁵

"All but four of the forty-three polls support the conclusion that native intelligence varies inversely with degree of religious faith; i.e., other factors being equal, the more intelligent a person is, the less religious he is."

3. *Kelley and Fiske, 1951*—In his book *Religious Behavior* (1958), Argyle reported (p. 95) on a study by E. L. Kelley and D. W. Fiske. They studied the relationship between the strength of the religious value and research competence among clinical psychologists and found a negative correlation of $-.39$. I have been unable to obtain a copy of their book *The Selection of Clinical Psychologists* (1951).

4. *Ann Roe, 1953*—In 1953 Anne Roe, a clinical psychologist, published the results of her personal psychological analysis of sixty-four eminent U.S. scientists, nearly all members of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences or of the American Philosophical Society. She reported that, while nearly all of them had religious parents and had attended Sunday school, "now only three of these men are seriously active in church. A few others attend upon occasion, or even give some financial support to a church which they do not attend. . . . All the others have long since dismissed religion as any guide to them, and the church plays no part in their lives. . . . A few are militantly atheistic, but most are just not interested.

5. *Francis Bello, 1954*—In order to determine "What kind of a man becomes an outstanding scientist?" Francis Bello interviewed or questionnaired 107 young (40 or under) non-industrial American scientists judged by their senior colleagues to be outstanding. He received 87 replies, and published his findings in *Fortune* (June 1954). He asked questions about religious belief and affiliation and found that his respondents were far less religious in belief and affiliation than their parents and the U.S. public. For instance, 45 percent of the 87 subjects claimed to be "agnostic or atheistic," and an additional 22 percent claimed no religious affiliation. Moreover, Bello reported that, for the 20 most eminent subjects, "the proportion who are now a-religious is considerably higher than in the entire survey group" (p. 143).

6. *Chambers, 1964*—In 1963 Jack A. Chambers of the University of South Florida sent questionnaires to 740 male U.S. psychologists and chemists (half already recognized as eminent) in order to determine the personality traits of creative scientists. On the basis of his data he reported that "the highly creative men . . . significantly more often show either no preference for a particular religion or little or no interest in any religion."²⁷ He found that the creative (i.e., eminent) scientists were very much less religious than the noneminent. For instance, 43 percent of the eminent psychologists had "no religious preference," though only 6 percent of their parents, and 17 percent of the noneminent psychologists, were so classified.²⁸ Moreover, the eminent psychologists were far less religious than the eminent chemists—40 percent "no-preference" versus 16 percent. All of these findings confirm Leuba's pioneer discoveries, but Chambers did not mention his work.

7. *Vaughan, Smith, and Sjöberg, 1965*—In 1959–60 T. R. Vaughan, D. H. Smith, and G. Sjöberg polled some 850 U.S. physicists, zoologists, chemical engineers, and geologists listed in *American Men of Science* (1955) on their church memberships, attendance patterns, and belief in an afterlife. They received 642 usable replies.

The replies revealed that 38.5 percent of these scientists did not believe in life after death and that only 31.8 percent did. However, belief in immortality was lower among scientists employed by “major universities,” presumably the most eminent, than among those employed by business, government, and “minor universities.”²⁹ According to several Gallup polls, about two-thirds of U.S. adults believe in life after death, so the scientists covered by this study were far less religious than the typical U.S. adult.

Gallup Public-Opinion Polls

More than a dozen U.S. public-opinion polls conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion, the Gallup polls, have uniformly shown that adults with some college education (average IQ, 115) are much less likely to support religious dogmas on God, immortality, hell, prayer, creation, abortion, etc., than are other U.S. adults (average IQ, 97). In my previous article in *FREE INQUIRY* I reported the findings of eight such adult polls and therefore will not report them again here. However, I report four more-recent Gallup polls, all of which support the same conclusion, namely, that college alumni are much less religious than other U.S. adults, probably in part because they are much more intelligent.

In 1981, Gallup asked U.S. adults to evaluate the Christian Bible as the “literal word of God,” as the “inspired word of God,” or as a “book of fables.” Only 21 percent of college alumni judged it to be the “literal word of God,” while 22% rated it as a “book of fables.” For grade-school subjects, the corresponding figures were 56% and 2%.³⁰

In 1981 Gallup also polled Americans on the importance of “following God’s will” and allowed pollees to grade the importance from 0 to 10. Of respondents with only some grade-school education, 66 percent gave the highest score, 10, to this importance, while only 39 percent of college alumni did so. Moreover, 7 percent of the college alumni gave it a zero score, while only 1 percent of the grade-school group did so.³¹

The doctrine that Jesus Christ is divine is a basic Christian dogma. In 1981 Gallup polled U.S. adults on their opinion of this dogma, permitting only four answers: completely true, mostly true, mostly false, and completely false. Only 48 percent of the college alumni marked it completely true, while 12 percent marked it completely untrue. For grade-school pollees the corresponding figures were 74 percent and 1 percent.³²

In 1982 Gallup polled U.S. adults on their response to the statement “I constantly seek God’s will through prayer.” Respondents were given a choice of four answers: “completely true, mostly true, mostly untrue, and completely untrue.” The poll revealed that 86 percent of the grade-school respondents claimed that the statement was “completely” (45 percent) or “mostly” (41 percent) true, while only 51 percent of the college

alumni claimed it to be “completely” (19 percent) or “mostly” (32 percent) true. And 45 percent of the college alumni marked the statement as “mostly” or “completely” untrue, compared with only 11 percent for grade-school pollees.³³

Studies of College Classes

In “The Effect of Education on Religious Beliefs” I cited several studies that revealed that college seniors are less religious than juniors, juniors than sophomores, and sophomores than freshmen; that college alumni are less religious than high-school graduates; and that high-school alumni are less religious than adults with a grade-school education. I have since collected other studies with similar conclusions.

Since these studies are numerous and primarily relevant to the effect of education on religious faith, I will not review them here. I wish only to note that the reported decline in religious faith with additional education is probably due in part, a small part, to the fact that some of the least intelligent students drop out each year as the process of formal education continues. Moreover, the IQs of many college students rise with age. Therefore, these studies of the effect of education on religiosity provide some weak evidence that religiosity varies inversely with intelligence as well as with amount of formal education.

Conclusions

In this essay I have reviewed: (1) sixteen studies of the correlation between individual measures of student intelligence and religiosity, all but three of which reported an inverse correlation; (2) five studies reporting that student bodies with high average IQ and/or SAT scores are much less religious than inferior student bodies; (3) three studies reporting that geniuses (average IQ, 150+) are much less religious than the general public (average IQ, 100), and one dubious study, (4) seven studies reporting that highly successful persons are much less religious in belief than are others; and (5) eight old and four new Gallup polls revealing that college alumni (average IQ, about 115) are much less religious in belief than are grade-school pollees.

I have also noted that many studies have shown that students become less religious as they proceed through college, probably in part because average IQ rises.

All but four of the forty-three polls I have reviewed support the conclusion that native intelligence varies inversely with degree of religious faith; i.e., that, other factors being equal, the more intelligent a person is, the less religious he is. It is easy to find fault with the studies I have reviewed, for all were imperfect. But the fact that all but four of them supported the general conclusion provides overwhelming evidence that, among American students and adults, the amount of religious faith tends to vary inversely and appreciably with intelligence.

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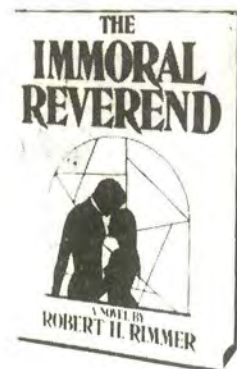
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The Other Ten Commandments

Tom Franczyk

Expressing the sentiments of the Religious Right, Phyllis Schlafly proclaims: "We support the Holy Scriptures as providing the best code of moral conduct yet devised." The Decalogue is often cited as an example of this high moral code. But which Decalogue?

There is only one place in the entire Bible where a listing of "God's laws" is called the "Ten Commandments" (or "Words"), and it is not the listing whose modified version is so popular. (See "Scorecard," FI, Fall, 1985. "Ten Commandments" are later mentioned in Deut. 4:13 and 10:4 without a listing.) This passage describes how a duplicate of the Decalogue had to be made to replace the original that was broken in anger:

The Lord said to Moses. "Cut two tables of the stone like the first; and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which you broke." [Exod. 34:1 (RSV); compare with Deut. 10:2. If you haven't read the book, you may have seen the movie.]

Someone had a memory lapse!:

"Observe what I command you this day. [1.] Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither you go, lest it become a snare in the midst of you. You shall tear down their altars, and break their pillars, and cut down their Asherim (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they play the harlot after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and one invites you, you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters play the harlot after their gods and make your sons play the harlot after their gods.

[2.] "You shall make for yourself no molten gods.

[3.] "The feast of unleavened bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib; for

the month Abib you came out of Egypt. [4.] All that opens the womb is mine, all your male cattle, the firstlings of cow and sheep. The firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. All the first-born of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.

[5.] "Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest. [6.] And you shall observe the feast of weeks, the first fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. [7.] Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out nations before you, and enlarge your borders; neither shall any man desire your land, when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times a year.

[8.] "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left until the morning. [9.] The first of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God. [10.] You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk."

And the Lord said to Moses, "Write these words; in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." . . . And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the *ten commandments*. [Exod. 34:11-28 (RSV); emphasis added. Compare with Exod. 20:2-17 and Deut. 5:6-21.]

There is no demand to love parents, not to kill, not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to bear false witness, or not to covet. (Most will find the second "tenth commandment" much easier to obey than the first!) As a matter of fact, the two listings have little in common besides a "jealous God," Sabbath observance, and prohibition of idolatry. God is here more interested in land, exclusivity, and ritual.

Did God forget the first Decalogue or change his mind? (Remember

Exodus 34:1 mentioned above.) A memory lapse is understandable if we are speaking of a *fallible* being, since there were so many other commandments issued while the Hebrews camped at Sinai. Here is a sampling from Exodus:

You must not mount up to my altar by steps, in case your private parts be exposed on it. [20:26 (NEB)]

When a man sells his daughter into slavery, she shall not go free as a male slave may. If her master has not had intercourse with her and she does not please him, he shall let her be ransomed. He has treated her unfairly and therefore has no right to sell her to strangers. If he assigns her to his son, he shall allow her the rights of a daughter. If he takes another woman, he shall not deprive the first of meat, clothes, and conjugal rights. If he does not provide her with these three things, she shall go free without any payment. [Exod. 21:7-11 (NEB)]

Whoever curses his father or mother shall be put to death. [Exod. 21:17 (NCE)]

When a man strikes his slave or his slave-girl with a stick and the slave dies on the spot, he must be punished. But he shall not be punished if the slave survives for one day or two, because he is worth money to his master. [21:20-21 (NEB)]

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. [22:18 (KJV)]

He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed. [22:20 (KJV)]

You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk. [23:19 (NCE)]

Are not these and *all* of "God's laws" obligatory?

Is the Religious Right endorsing the "other" commandments in the Bible when it says our country should return to "the Holy Scriptures" and "traditional values"? Is this part of the "Judeo-Christian tradition" of which the Reagan Administration speaks so fondly?

Biographies of Jesus

Vern L. Bullough

The Lives of Jesus: A History and Bibliography, by Warren S. Kissinger (New York: Garland, 1985), 210 pp., \$39.00, cloth.

What sort of person was Jesus? The attempts to answer this question have resulted in numerous biographies, and the results have varied according to the biographer. Jesus has been depicted as a super-salesman (by Bruce Barton), as husband and sexual person (by William Phipps), and as a revolutionary (by numerous authors). Warren S. Kissinger has compiled a listing of approximately two thousand biographies, distinguishing these accounts from Christological works and special episodes recounted in the New Testament such as miracles, the passion, the baptism, and teachings. He has also written a lengthy introduction, since his collection ranges from studies by scholars to stories aimed at juveniles from books by dedicated believers to those who regard Christianity as a superstition.

Perhaps surprisingly, the notion of Jesus as a person did not receive much attention in the first fifteen hundred years of Christian scholarship and teaching. Instead, the early church fathers were concerned with what has been called "harmonies," i.e., harmonizing the descriptions of Jesus in the four Gospels. In the Middle Ages the most popular works of Jesus literature were Meditations on the life of Jesus, devotional guides for the faithful based upon the gospel portraits.

The first person to be concerned enough with the historical character of Jesus to mount a massive investigation was Hermann Samuel Reimarus, an eighteenth-century theologian and philosopher. Reimarus held that Jesus' message had a dual emphasis: (1) the necessity of repentance, and (2) the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. He also argued that Jesus always remained a Jew and had no intention of founding a new religion. Instead, when Jesus' attempt to free his fellow Jews from political oppres-

sion failed, his disciples removed his body from the grave and made up a story about his appearing to them. Reimarus's study was published posthumously (between 1774 and 1778) and created a sensation, since by stripping Jesus of his metaphysical and dogmatic characterizations and by visualizing him only as a prophet and moral teacher, Reimarus began the quest for the historical Jesus. Both orthodox and rationalist investigators now had to look at the Bible differently.

Even more controversial than Reimarus was David Friedrich Strauss, whose *Life of Jesus* was published in 1835. Unfortunately for him, Strauss published his study while still a professor at Tübingen, and he lost his academic post, a fact that has served as a damper on many a would-be investigator of the life of Jesus. Strauss rejected the rationalist and supernatural interpretations of Jesus and proposed a new mode, the mythical. In his mind the Gospels could not be regarded as authentic history but only as perceptions of truth: myths expressed in story-like form. Strauss held that there were two gradations of myths about Jesus. The first was evangelical, which was not so much an expression of fact as a product of an idea of Jesus' earlier followers. Examples of this were the transfiguration and the rending of the veil of the temple. The second type of myth was historical, based on an actual individual but reflecting religious enthusiasm and surrounded by myths drawn from Christological ideas. Behind these two forms of myth lay the real Jesus, but Strauss's judgment as to which occurrences were historical and which mythical did not find much agreement.

Perhaps the most popular biography of Jesus was that by Ernest Renan, which first appeared in 1863 in French. Although Renan followed Strauss in denying miracles, he believed that the historian could recover sufficient other material from the Gospels, particularly that of John, which he preferred over the synoptic ones (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). Renan's account was written for a popular rather than scholarly audience, and it became a best-seller. In Renan's version,

Jesus becomes a sort of gentle dreamer who wanders through Galilee entranced by the goodness of life, gathering a band of followers. Increasingly influenced by the apocalyptic views of John the Baptist, he becomes filled with revolutionary zeal. This leads to his crucifixion, which was brought about both by the cruelty of evil men and by Jesus' own inflated dreams of his mission.

Following Renan there were a number of "liberal" accounts of the life of Jesus, more or less in the same vein. One difference, however, was the way the nationality of particular writers led them (all were men) to convey their messages in different ways. Generally, the German critics came closest to pure scholarship and were often the most difficult to read. The French writers after Renan were more impressionistic and less scholarly, while the British tried to turn scholarship into public literature. Inevitably there was a reaction. Martin Kähler, for example, argued that these biographies of Jesus were merely examples of human creativity and were on a part with some of the excesses associated with dogmatic Christianity. In his own study, Kähler stated that the portrayals of Jesus by most of his predecessors were "far removed from the real Christ." Albert Schweitzer joined the fray with his own study; in which he held that Jesus was an ancient apocalypticist and not a modern social reformer. In his mind the historical Jesus remained unknown and could only be understood by contact with his spirit; in short, by faith and not through the study of history.

This, however, did not end the discussion. A number of writers, Arthur Drews and William Benjamin Smith among them, argued that the cult of Jesus was a relic of superstition that needed to be purged from religion. Adolf Harnack took a different tack. He held that, though the Gospels were insufficient as a source for a biography of Jesus, they nonetheless offered a true picture of his teaching, recounting how his life was in the service of his vocation and describing the impression he made on his disciples. For him, as for Schweitzer, the message of Jesus was more important than the story of his life.

James MacKinnon (1931) saw the greatness and uniqueness of Jesus in his spiritual and ethical life and regarded him as the most compelling personality of all time. Maurice Goguel (1932) believed that by entering into the "psychology of those who have been the actors in the story, by an attempt to revive their state of mind through an effort of intelligent sympathy and understanding," the life of Jesus could have meaning. For him, in fact, comprehending Jesus

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came through understanding his thought and religious experiences, particularly during the various crises in his life.

German scholars after World War I put forth something called "form criticism," which can be described as the study of the history of the oral tradition behind the Gospels. Form critics viewed the Gospels as compilations of older material and attempted to find the originals. Rudolf Bultmann was influenced both by form critics and by existential theory. Existential historians see a relationship between history and the historical existence of the historian. Thus Bultmann focused on a highly personal encounter with Jesus. His concern was not so much with the historical Jesus as with the teachings attributed to him—with the *kerygma*, the apostolic preaching that Jesus was the

Christ.

Nonetheless, Bultmann's emphasis on the discontinuity between history and *kerygma*, between the earthly Jesus and the "risen Lord," led to new attempts to understand the historical Jesus, since, as James M. Robinson states in an overview of the renewed quest for the historical Jesus, Bultmann enabled scholars to attempt to form a new concept both of history and of self. Robinson was also concerned with the meaning of events and, since the *kerygma* imparts meaning to an event, both history and *kerygma* come together. If this is the case, we can conclude that any new quest for the historical Jesus will not prove or disprove the *kerygma*, but rather only that the existential decision with regard to the *kerygma* is an existential decision with

regard to Jesus. Our presuppositions will become our conclusions, since historical scholarship cannot, because of its limitations, validate the claims that both the *kerygma* and faith make for Jesus.

The best we can hope for is that some matters of faith might be clarified for those believers willing to listen to the scholars. True believers, however, will not accept such answers; they would argue that faith transcends history. Still, for those who want to pursue the various interpretations of the life of Jesus, I can recommend Warren Kissinger's bibliography as a guide. There is a lifetime of reading in it; and, although the ability to read German and French would be helpful, there are enough works in English to keep the reader occupied for ten or twenty years. •

An Insider's View of Fundamentalism

Max Hocutt

With Faith and Fury, by Delos Banning McKown (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1985), 440 pp., \$16.95, cloth.

With *Faith and Fury*, a novel about religion in the Appalachian hills of Tennessee and Kentucky, is written by Delos B. McKown, who knows his subject inside and out. A native of Michigan who grew up in the area he writes about, McKown was trained as a preacher and practiced the art for a dozen years. Then he gave up his religion for humanist philosophy and became a wry and bemused observer of the folly he once shared. Now a professor of philosophy at Auburn University, he has turned to fiction as a means of telling others what he has learned.

The structure of McKown's book reflects his insider-outsider view of fundamentalist religion. The novel has two protagonists, one tragicomic and one triumphant. Its tragic fool is Manly John Plumwell, of Pilsudsky County, Tennessee. The best-dressed, best-behaved, and most scholarly member of his high-school class, Manly suffers from a repressed sexual drive that finds an outlet

only in masturbation and charismatic religion. The book's hero is Adrian DeWulf, a Texas Christian University-trained minister turned agnostic philosopher. Once a professional advocate of Christian theology, Adrian has become its relentless critic and, in the process, been made sexually whole.

The first part of the story is written from Manly's point of view. When his grandmother dies and he is left with no close relatives, Manly is recruited to the ministry of a mystical, mountain faith-healer who styles herself as the Handmaiden of the Lord. The Handmaiden has built an enormously successful new sect, complete with a Bible college, where Manly is taught the sect's distinctive new theology, three-world creationism, before being sent back home to serve his boyhood church as pastor. He is quite successful until a succession of embarrassing incidents persuades the Handmaiden and her advisors that Brother Plumwell would serve the Lord better as a chaplain at Algonquin State University.

At Algonquin, Manly meets Adrian DeWulf, newly arrived from Columbia University to serve as the temporary replacement for a pious professor of philosophy

who has been taken ill. Equipped with the critical skills that every good philosopher has in his intellectual tool kit, Adrian easily deflates the religion he knows so well and dislikes so completely. This makes him popular with some of the brighter students but gets him in trouble with the school's pious administration and faculty. It also brings him into direct conflict with the Reverend Manly Plumwell, who secretly adores the comely young coed who is Adrian's beloved. Sex and religion combine to bring the novel's dialectic between fundamentalism and humanism to a bloody climax. This is followed by a who-done-it mystery that is solved in brilliant fashion by the erudite chairman of Algonquin's department of philosophy.

It is clear throughout this story that Delos McKown thinks Manly Plumwell is a benighted fool and Adrian DeWulf an enlightened hero. It is also clear that, although McKown's brain is on DeWulf's side, his heart is with poor Plumwell. Despite his slightly archaic style, McKown is a very funny writer whose witty play with language and telling of tall tales can make you laugh out loud. But McKown is also a highly sensitive human being who is deeply saddened by the way in which backwoods superstition has turned Manly's youthful promise and energy to perversion and tragedy. McKown is also puzzled about how Plumwell's religion, with its obvious intellectual and moral deficiencies, can have such a strong hold on an entire culture.

This is the best exposé of fundamentalist religion I have read since *Elmer Gantry*. Who would have thought a professor of philosophy capable of such great passion and high art. •

Max Hocutt is professor of philosophy at the University of Alabama.

Viewpoints

The Quiet Invasion of the Classroom

Edd Doerr

Jerry Falwell and other "moral majoritarian" televangelists have expended enormous effort in recent years to try to convince the American people that the United States Supreme Court and a cabal of sinister secular-humanists have driven God out of the public schools and denied forty million students the right to pray. The truth, of course, is that the Supreme Court has neither driven any deities anywhere nor forbidden so much as a single student to pray. The Court has simply ruled that no level of government may sponsor, organize, or regiment devotional exercises for students. What is more, such a large percentage of mainstream religious leaders and groups, not to mention educators and civil libertarians, support the Supreme Court's church-state rulings that Congress has defeated every attempt to amend the Constitution to authorize government-regimented religion in public schools.

Do Falwell and his friends, then, believe that their propaganda offensive will eventually induce Congress to cave in to them? Perhaps. But a more likely explanation is that the noisy school-prayer campaign has a different purpose: to mask a quiet invasion of the public schools by a horde of evangelists, missionaries, proselytizers, and assorted "youth ministers."

In 1984, after the Senate had defeated President Reagan's school-prayer amendment and while both houses were considering so-called equal-access legislation, Falwell told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (April 27, 1984): "We knew we couldn't win on school prayer, but equal access gets us what we wanted all along."

The "equal access" legislation passed in 1984 required that public secondary schools (in most states, seventh grade and up) that allow any noncurricular, student-initiated groups or clubs to meet in school must allow

all student-initiated religious or ideological groups to meet also. The legislation allows student groups to bring in nonstudent missionaries and proselytizers.

According to a 1983 study by *Education Week*, there are more than 4,500 outside missionaries operating in public schools. Some of the main groups sponsoring them are Young Life, Bill "I Found It" Bright's Campus Crusade, Campus Life, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Some of the missionaries hang around school cafeterias and halls, inviting students to attend off-campus meetings where they can be slowly indoctrinated and converted. Others get schools to allow them to conduct religiously oriented school assemblies for entire student bodies. Still others work through athletic-program volunteers to do their evangelizing.

All or virtually all of these missionaries seem to be fundamentalists or evangelicals. None are Catholic, Jewish, mainline or liberal Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, or humanist. All would agree with a recent article in Falwell's *Fundamentalist Journal* that the public schools are the largest mission field, larger than most countries.

Among the most successful evangelists today is twenty-six-year-old Jerry Johnston of Shawnee Mission, Kansas, who claims to have addressed two million students in two thousand public schools. Johnston gains access to what he calls his "virgin mission field" by offering half-hour assembly programs that are ostensibly on drug and alcohol abuse and teen suicide. He admits to using "a neutral, secular theme that was relevant and valid" to "develop rapport to [sic] the students by my presentation and later invite them to a gospel service."

Johnston provided a good example of his modus operandi in Pinellas County (in the Tampa Bay area), Florida, in November. In apparent collaboration with Trinity Baptist Church in Clearwater, Johnston conned county school officials into allowing him to conduct half-hour assembly programs in eleven public middle and high schools. The assembly programs—for which Johnston was

paid \$250 each, although it is not certain whether the fees came from school or private funds—dealt as usual with drug and alcohol abuse and teen suicide. The programs built up to a persuasive invitation to an "all you can eat" free "pizza blast," to be held on Thursday, November 14, in Clearwater's Jack Russell Stadium.

About four thousand students showed up at the stadium, largely unaware that they were going to be treated to a religious revival service for two hours before they got their free pizza. They were asked to fill out cards with their name, address, age, grade, school, and church affiliation. Buckets were passed for donations. The stadium rally also marked the end of a five-day revival Johnston was conducting at Trinity Baptist Church.

The *St. Petersburg Times* blasted the whole affair in an editorial (November 15,

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Edd Doerr is executive director of Americans for Religious Liberty, and vice president of the American Humanist Association.

1985): "Administrators who should have known better, and who were forewarned, allowed an evangelist to use the Pinellas County public schools this week to recruit students for a mass religious rally. It defies belief that such a thing could happen so many years after the U.S. Supreme Court explained why it should not. . . . Some 30 years after the Supreme Court began to draw the line on religion in the public schools, its decisions are still sadly misunderstood by too many people. They are among the wisest decisions the Court ever handed down because they recognize that freedom of religion means nothing if the power of government—in this case, the public schools—can be used for the purpose of religious indoctrination."

After Johnston spoke at a school in Wooster, Ohio, last April, twelve-year-old Dana Golub went home and hanged himself. According to press accounts, attempted and threatened teen suicides increased after Johnston's visits to schools in Wooster and Akron.

No one knows how successful Johnston and other fundamentalist proselytizers are in what are supposed to be religiously neutral public schools. But such activity clearly violates the First Amendment, offends many, if not most, state constitutions, destroys the neutrality that our pluralism requires of our schools, and undermines the religious integrity of countless families. What parent wants Johnny or Janie to come home from school converted to another religion as a result of activities sponsored, approved, or allowed by school authorities? And matters are not helped when the U.S. Secretary of Education, William Bennett, publicly expresses approval of teachers and school officials attempting to influence students' religious views.

What is as astonishing as the sectarian invasion of the public schools by Jerry Johnston and other "soul snatchers" is the lack of publicity about such serious attacks on the First Amendment, on the integrity of our schools, and on the minds of literally millions of American children. Even more astonishing is the fact that no court challenge to this activity has been launched.

Concerned citizens should determine their local school district policy regarding equal-access groups and outside missionaries operating in the schools. Policies to keep the schools properly neutral should be urged on all school boards. Intrusions by Jerry Johnston or other missionaries should be protested, preferably in advance of their appearance. When school officials refuse to keep the schools in their charge neutral, legal action may be considered. •

A Humanistic Alternative to Alcoholics Anonymous

Donald G. Simmermacher

"Sobriety Without Superstition" by James Christopher (FI, Summer 1985) was a refreshing disclosure. As a civilian social worker for the U.S. Air Force Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program, I am frequently involved with clients who share this view.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is religious in nature, and its emphasis on public confession, acts of contrition, and divine intervention is well documented. Most who espouse the AA philosophy openly thwart any efforts to introduce more humanistic or secular approaches to the substance abuse field.

My efforts to provide an alternative to AA for those who may not respond favorably to its approach have been met with considerable resistance from those who believe AA to be the only acceptable chemical dependency recovery program. This is not unlike the attitude of the Religious Right that is reflected in its attacks against humanism and its attempts to suppress humanistic teachings in the public schools. One of my greatest concerns is that AA, as a religious organization, is being imposed upon individuals as a condition of substance-abuse treatment and rehabilitation. Mandatory attendance at AA meetings has become a common practice in treatment programs across the country. It has been called into question as the result of recent litigation in the states of Colorado and Wisconsin.

In Colorado, John Hansen, in conjunction with a group identified as the American Atheist Addiction Recovery Group (AAARG), filed a lawsuit seeking \$500,000 in punitive damages for civil rights violations, medical malpractice, and discrimination against secular aftercare programs. Hansen, a former patient of the Veteran's Administration Alcohol Dependency Treat-

ment Program at Fort Lyons, Colorado, alleged that he was forced to attend AA as a condition of treatment for diagnosed alcoholism. Hansen charged that the mandatory AA attendance was synonymous with treating a medical problem with religion instead of accepted medical practice and procedures. The VA chose to settle out of court and agreed to issue a letter to all of its facilities stating that no patient will be required or forced to attend AA or any other program that is of a "religious nature."

Another case, which is still pending litigation in Western District Court of Wisconsin, was filed by Norman Granberg. He is seeking a total of \$1 million in damages because he was forced to attend AA after a drunk-driving incident. Granberg alleges he was enrolled in a residential treatment facility and was forced to purchase AA literature of religious content and attend AA meetings as a condition of compliance with his court-ordered treatment regimen.

As an employee of the U.S. Air Force Substance Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Program, I have witnessed numerous cases in which AA has been imposed as a mandatory condition of alcohol-abuse rehabilitation. In one case, an individual was considered to have failed his treatment because of his resistance to attending AA and was removed from the Air Force. His prognosis was considered unfavorable because, as stated in the medical summary, "he was unable to find his *Higher Power*" (emphasis mine).

These cases represent just the tip of the iceberg. There are thousands of people forced to attend AA even though they do not respond to the religious approach of this self-help group.

It is well known that, for those who willingly accept the religious philosophy of AA, it can be an invaluable recovery resource. AA is a fellowship of men and women who wish to maintain sobriety. The AA's main value is the encouragement, support, and camaraderie offered its members. Of course this can also be said of any effective support group, whether it be of a spiri-

Donald G. Simmermacher is a civilian social worker in the U.S. Air Force Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

tual (religious) or secular nature.

It is not my intention to minimize AA's value as a positive helping resource for the recovering addict, but to attempt to resolve the question of its religious orientation. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines "religion" as follows: "The expression of man's belief in a reverence for a superhuman power recognized as the creator and governor of the universe . . . the spiritual or emotional attitude of one who recognizes the existence of a superhuman power or powers" (emphasis mine).

The AA process is guided by twelve steps. Six of the twelve clearly refer the surrender to, or the dependency on, an external higher power. These six steps that recovered alcoholics have taken are described as follows:

Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him.

Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step 7: Humbly asked Him (God) to remove our shortcomings.

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Anyone who has ever attended AA meetings is aware of the "Serenity Prayer" that is said at the beginning of each meeting. The prayer begins with the word "God." Acknowledgment of the existence of God requires belief in a superhuman or supernatural power. The second word of the prayer is "grant," which implies the belief that this *higher power* is a supernatural being or power who can bestow or give to lesser beings.

The book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, or the so-called Big Book, makes frequent reference to the need to believe in God, or a higher power, as a condition of maintaining sobriety and alcohol-abuse recovery.

Many other examples could be given to show that AA is indeed religious in nature. Its literature refers to "God," "Him," and "Higher Power." To argue, therefore, that AA does not require religious convictions is ludicrous. However, to try to discredit AA as a significant helping resource to those who accept its religious philosophy would be unethical and irresponsible. I do

not believe, however, as many seem to, that the failure to accept AA's religious philosophy means that the recovering alcoholic is unsalvageable. This kind of zealous fanaticism does little to promote truth, tolerance, and understanding.

AA membership is estimated to be somewhere between half a million and one million members. Since there are an estimated ten to twelve million alcoholics in the United States, of them, many may be in need of an alternative recovery program. Persons with alcoholic and other drug-related problems are a heterogeneous group and require the availability of different treatment approaches to meet their diverse needs. Some people resist AA's religious orientation. Others who are not verbally skilled in giving personal testimonies or disclosures may be uncomfortable with AA's approach. Some find the "one-upmanship" or "Can you top this?" testimonials ineffective. Others feel that AA does not encourage personal growth and self-actualization. AA participants are not encouraged to become self-supporting or self-reliant. Their social life is often limited to making friends only with other alcoholics. Some disagree with the concept that members can never move beyond the AA group. It can be viewed as the substitution of chemicals for another kind of dependency—the continual AA group meeting that becomes a way of life.

There is evidence that two personality

traits are common in substance abusers: *low self-esteem* and *an external locus of control*. Since not all alcoholics or other drug-abusers may respond favorably to AA, there is a need to develop secular support groups that can act as alternatives for those who may not be religious. I have spent more than a decade developing and implementing a substance abuse aftercare program that I call "Self-Image Modification Training." The *Self-Image Modification Training Manual* (Health Communications, Inc., Hollywood, Fla., 1981) provides a synthesis of various humanistic counseling approaches based on a systems-theory model of human growth and development.

Having the tolerance to allow people to choose their own values—spiritual or otherwise—is the best way to facilitate the human growth process. This approach is also compatible with the democratic principles upon which our nation was founded. Our Constitution provides for the freedom of choice of religion, or the freedom to have no religious convictions at all. Requiring anyone to participate in a religiously oriented program like AA is totally improper and violates the conditions that guarantee a free, pluralistic, and democratic society. I do not mean to imply or suggest that AA participation should not be encouraged for the recovering alcoholic or drug addict, as long as it is being offered as a program of choice among other viable alternatives. •

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You Are What You're Told

Thomas S. Vernon

Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.

—Oscar Wilde

Recently I read a rather interesting story by H. G. Wells entitled "The Mind of Mr. Joseph Davis." I found the following passage to be thought-provoking as well as amusing; it describes the religious upbringing of "Joseph Davis":

They told him that a God of Eastern Levantine origin, the God of Abraham (who evidently had a stupendous bosom) and Isaac and Jacob, had made the whole universe, stars and atoms, from start to finish in six days and made it wonderfully and perfect, and had set it all going and, after some necessary ennui called the Fall and the Flood, had developed arrangements that were to culminate in the earthly happiness and security and eternal bliss of our Joseph, which had seemed to him a very agreeable state of affairs. And further they had shown him the most convincing pictures of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel and had given him a Noah's Ark to play with and told him simple Bible stories about the patriarchs and the infant Samuel and Solomon and David and their remarkable lessons for us, the promise of salvation spreading out from the Eastern Levant until it covered the world, and he had taken it all in without flinching because at the time he had no standards of comparison. Anything might be as true as anything else. Except for the difference in color they put him into the world of *Green Pastures* and there they trained him to be a simple believing little Anglican.

Wells reminds us here that, to a very great degree, we are what we are told we are. Of course, not all "telling" is by words; we are "told," also, by example, and by the expectations and demands to which we are

subject. That we are mainly what we are told is evident when we reflect that, had Joseph been born in India, or Saudi Arabia, or Russia, he would most likely have been, accordingly, a Hindu, or Muslim, or a dialectical materialist. You are what you are told, and what you are told depends on the company you keep during your formative years.

The situation is not, however, as stable as the one depicted in Wells's story. In the first place, many people are not "properly brought up"; that is, during their formative years they are not told with sufficient forcefulness and consistency who and what they are. Lacking a firm sense of identity, these people often cast about searching—though they may not realize that this is what they are doing—for someone who will tell them who they are. It is under these circumstances that some people become criminals. During times of social change and upheaval, more people are likely to seek their identity, as in Germany, for example, prior to World War II. When times are hard, it is especially difficult to tolerate not having a firm concept of one's identity.

Even if times are not especially hard, it can be very uncomfortable to be without a clearly structured psyche, to be unsure of what and who you are. In a polymorphous society such as we have in America, a rich variety of identities is manifest. Such a complex society also gives rise to a disproportionately large number of persons whose early nurturing fails to provide them with a well-structured self-concept. Presently, one of the most common ways of satisfying this need is through religion.

People who are firmly grounded in an established religion, whether Catholic, or Jewish, or Protestant, are already "saved," which is to say they are relatively untroubled by doubts and puzzlements as to who they are. That a large proportion of the population is, however, psychically rootless is made evident by the prevalence of religious sectarianism and radicalism. Identity-seeking persons look for someone to tell them, in an authoritative and convincing way, just who they are, and any number of religious sects and cults stand ready and able to sup-

ply this need.

The personhood of most people rests upon a conceptual edifice that will not bear a dispassionate, logical examination. The obvious provincialism of Christian, Hindu, and Muslim belief-systems, for example, is enough in itself to belie any claims to universal validity. This does not necessarily produce unhappy results. Persons who are thoroughly habituated to the ways of a long-established religious tradition are generally sufficiently secure not to feel threatened by different religious persuasions. If, in addition, as is usually the case, these persons have been reared under the influence of the secular mores of civilized behavior, there is little likelihood that they will engage in overtly hostile actions against competing religious establishments. One can scarcely imagine for example, an Episcopalian plot to burn down the First Presbyterian Church, or vice versa. Persons of this sort, furthermore, exhibit a degree of elasticity with regard to the theological tenets to which they nominally adhere; they are happily able to avoid being rigid and doctrinaire. They do not, in other words, feel obliged to take seriously and literally formally avowed doctrines that would make it difficult for them to feel comfortable in a pluralistic and technological society.

A great many persons, however, are not so fortunately situated. Through one or another combination of circumstances, they did not receive, during the formative period of their lives, a deeply instilled identity; they failed to acquire a stable sense of who they are—and they were not given the means and inclination to find out. These emotionally rootless people are highly susceptible to the chance winds of fortune. At the lower end of the economic scale, these people, as I have already indicated, may drift into the dark underworld of organized crime, where their association with a disciplined group rewards their predatory activity with status and an identity of sorts. Near the opposite end of the economic scale are a class of people who might be referred to as the "non-idle rich," although the current designation for them seems to be the term *yuppy*. On the admittedly questionable basis of media reporting, one gathers that the chief *raison d'être* for this group is their enjoyment of the material advantages of affluence. Whether or not this is an accurate characterization of "yuppies," experience indicates that an "endless round of pleasure-seeking" does not yield a satisfying sense of identity and self-worth.

The majority of identity-seeking persons doubtless falls between these two

Thomas S. Vernon is professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Arkansas and a frequent contributor to FREE INQUIRY.

extremes, and they are the ones most susceptible to the attractions of religious radicalism and cultism. Charismatic television evangelists and cult leaders provide at least two basic rewards for their victims. The emotional experience of "salvation" provides the customer with a shining new identity to replace a shabby and dreary one; they are now the personal recipients of divine attention and love and know who they are; and this sense of a new and glorious identity is reinforced by their association with others who share the illusion. The utter irrationality of the belief-structure of such groups is a measure of how desperately people need to be told who they are. People, it seems, will believe *anything* that promises them a sense of identity.

Many identity-seeking persons have, through years of frustration and humiliation, developed a large store of pent-up hostilities. A second service provided by religious radicalism and cultism is to give those who need it a means of venting their suppressed rage. Many of these religious movements are closely allied with ultraconservative political interests and therefore find ways for the expression of hostility that are politically safe, like the anti-abortion movement, government-enforced prayer in public schools, and the promotion of "creation science." It is also acceptable to direct verbal abuse at "humanists," "peaceniks," and others regarded as "liberal" by the leaders of these movements. It is not always possible to keep these destructive impulses under control, and a few extremists step out of line and become bombers and arsonists for Christ. When religious radicalism acquires enough power to control a society, a frightful bloodbath can ensue, as has happened, for example, in Iran.

It needs to be pointed out that not all such outbursts of hostility are religiously motivated. Some, whose need to establish their identity in violent ways is very strong, associate themselves with paramilitary organizations or private companies of mercenary adventurers.

Fortunately, America has a longstanding tradition of law and order that characterizes Western civilization in general. This is a tradition that has been slowly and imperfectly established over a period of centuries and, while quite strong, is not invincible. That it can disintegrate is being illustrated today in Ireland. Eternal vigilance is doubtless the price of law and order as well as of liberty. I am reminded of the often-quoted lines from Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village":

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men
decay.

I do not suppose a necessary correlation here; I would not suggest, nor, perhaps, would Goldsmith, that an accumulation of wealth in a nation inevitably causes moral decay among its citizens. What I would suggest, however, is that, if a large proportion of a country's citizens suffer confusion with respect to their identities, they do not have a firm sense of who and what they are, then that country will fare ill and become prey to a host of troubles. This must be considered an important contributing factor along with economic, political, and ecological matters.

How is it possible for people to acquire a sturdy sense of identity? It is commonly proposed that what is needed is to re-establish the old orthodoxies. This is a counsel of despair, however; for the old orthodoxies have broken down, and even if they could be re-established they would be subject to the same erosive influences that brought about their demise in the first place. I suspect it has always been the case, up to now at least, that *the majority of people are what they are told they are*; and, so long as this is the case, we may have to conclude that there is no health in the body politic. So long as we are what we are told, we are the potential victims of some charismatic mountebank, as were the people of Germany who allowed themselves to be persuaded that they were Aryans and members of the Master Race.

As we look back over history, we can see that there have always been a few persons—very few, to be sure—who have been not what they were told but *what they told themselves*; that is, they were self-directed persons and not other-directed persons. Within my very limited range of wisdom, this is now what appears to me as the only way of gaining moral health, as a nation and as a race of human beings. It is a prescription that is much easier to put into words than to carry out in practice. If you are going to tell yourself who you are and do so successfully, you must develop a self-concept that is grounded in reality and able to withstand the vicissitudes of changing fashion and the powerful tides of public opinion. To be a self-directed person requires extended preparation; it is a long-term project that, in a sense, is never completed.

To be a self-directing person involves, in the first place, a large element of luck; one must be born at the right time and in

the right circumstances, and one doubtless also needs a certain genetic endowment. These are what we might, at the present time, have to regard as uncontrollable factors, but it does not seem to me utterly impossible that this "luck factor" can be diminished by the gradual institution of appropriate environmental controls, involving most importantly an intelligently designed program of education. This is more of a hope on my part than anything else, and I certainly cannot offer any blueprint for its realization.

How does a person become autonomous and self-directing? I do not pretend to know the complete recipe, but I can offer what I regard as some of the essential ingredients. I think one needs, first of all, to learn how to think for oneself, which involves an understanding of the basic rules of rationality as well as experience in the accumulating and evaluating of evidence. Of equal importance is a good working knowledge of history that includes not only political history but also an acquaintance with the literary, artistic, intellectual, and scientific heritage of our civilization. Third, and also of equal importance, is a sense of compassion and a real concern for the welfare of one's fellow humans. Mere factual knowledge, important as it is, is not enough in itself; there must also be the ability to make wise value-judgments, to have sound priorities. Finally, and especially now when it is so unfashionable and unpopular, one must have the courage both to establish and to follow one's own guidelines on the basis of no authority other than one's own. •

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(Letters, continued from p. 4)

matic espousal of theism hardly demands gumption in the current climate.

Adolf Grünbaum
Center for Philosophy of Science
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Facing AIDS

I mostly applaud Vern Bullough's coverage of the AIDS issue from the humanist perspective ("Facing AIDS," Winter 1985/86). I particularly agree with the proposal to provide drug abusers with free sterile paraphernalia in order to limit the spread of the disease. This is not only the humane answer, but also (as it turns out) the cost-effective one. This year the 1,500 addicts who contract AIDS from sharing needles will cost society \$200 million in medical bills alone—and that is more than enough money to provide a year's supply of sterile equipment for each of the country's 750,000 users. The fact that a program of this sort is not being seriously considered by any legislature illustrates that utilitarian pragmatism still has a long way to go in American political philosophy.

I wish Dr. Bullough had fully commented (beyond voicing his disapproval) on the proposal to quarantine certain AIDS victims. Would Bullough oppose the legal restraint of an AIDS patient who persisted in initiating sexual contact with people not aware of the special risk? From the standpoint of public safety, how is such an AIDS patient different from a patient with rabies who wants to bite people? In some cases (probably a minority) it can be argued that the transmission of AIDS involves one person deceiving and deliberately mortally endangering another for the sake of gain. Is this not a more anti-social act than drunk driving or a number of other acts for which we lock people up in this society? How say the liberal humanists?

Steven B. Harris, M.D.
Long Beach, Calif.

Vern Bullough States that AIDS is transmitted "only through anal intercourse or by blood contamination." An article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 254, no. 15, reports otherwise.

Robert Erck
Lombard, Ill.

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Vern Bullough replies:

AIDS poses special difficulty in terms of quarantine since we still do not know who has AIDS until they become ill. We are not certain what showing up positive to AIDS means, and we are not certain when the disease is contagious. In sum, we need to know more, at least in my opinion, before we can act intelligently.

We know that AIDS may be transmitted through heterosexual intercourse since there is evidence that it exists among females in Africa. We are still not certain that this transmission is not through blood contamination, and it has been argued that one reason for the susceptibility in Africa is due to the widespread existence of clitoridectomies (Uli Linke, "Aids in Africa" Science, 17 January 1986). As of this writing, in the United States there remains only one case of the transmission of AIDS that as yet cannot be explained by membership in one of the groups at risk, i.e., homosexuals, drug abusers, hemophiliacs, et al., but I suspect there will be more. The issue is still being debated.

Psychoanalysis, Freud and Pseudoscience

Adolf Grünbaum's book *The Foundations of Psychoanalysis* and the four reviews of it (FI, Fall 1985) add up to a positive orgy of Popper bashing. One would never guess that Sir Karl has hardly published anything on either Freud or psychoanalysis. Perhaps Popper should have taken Freud more seriously, but in the past fifty years or so, i.e., in the time since Popper came to New Zealand and started to publish in English, interest in Freud and psychoanalysis has been slight in the rest of the world compared with that in the United States. It is worth pointing out that Popper's critics have generally agreed with him about Freud, if about little else.

Jim Ring
Nelson, New Zealand

It has become fashionable within the news media to denigrate Freud. The reasons are clear: The reading public enjoys being told that a supposedly great man was not all that great. Besides, many people resent the idea that someone might know more about their minds than they know themselves. Speaking for myself, a layman, I have been studying Freud's works (in German) for the past sixty years and still admire his lucid presentation of fascinating thoughts that

were entirely his own.

For reasons best known to you, you decided to enlighten your readers about psychoanalysis. Why then did you limit your presentation to one-sided criticism? And why did the critics focus on the question of whether psychoanalysis deserves to be called a science? Do you really think your readers care? I for one happen to believe that psychoanalysis is not a science, which does not take away one bit from Freud's greatness.

H. J. Eysenck, a behavioral psychologist, by proclaiming the "death knell for psychoanalysis as a theory" seems to reject peaceful coexistence. He takes great pains to assure us that his method of treating patients is more effective and more successful than psychoanalytic treatment. If this is a fact, he ought to be a happy person and should not write like an angry man.

Max Rudolf
Philadelphia, Pa.

Madalyn O'Hair "Excommunicates" Fellow Atheists

Having formerly defended the American Atheists organization and Madalyn O'Hair in this column (Letters, FI, Spring 1984), it now becomes my sad duty to corroborate the comments of Jeff Governale (Letters, FI, Winter 1985/86) with regard to O'Hair's despotic, psychotic behavior. Among many contributions in eight years of membership, I authored two major articles published in the *American Atheist Journal* and had prepared a series of others; donated well into four figures and recently purchased a \$500 life membership; appeared as a spokesman for American atheism on live television, before many student organizations, and for liberal church study groups; sponsored atheist/humanist speakers on our campus; and attempted to found a student atheist club. (I thought I might be a contender for the "Atheist of the Year" award.) Despite these efforts and much more, I too was excommunicated! In a marginally coherent expulsion decree, O'Hair solemnly declared:

... So—I give you your freedom ... I have personally, just now flushed you off the computer, forever, and ever and ever ... Amen. You are free now. Your mail will be returned unopened. Your telephone calls will be refused.

My crimes? I had questioned the date of the next national convention, asked that they save postage by not sending receipts

for my donations, and—*mea maxima culpa*—sent a clipping from the *Secular Humanist Bulletin* about Lincoln's "Christianity" quote, and urged caution in our use of such quotes. Clearly, I must have been reading *another* freethought publication!

The very fact that, like some deranged high priestess, O'Hair can unilaterally "flush" dedicated members speaks volumes as to American Atheists' chaotic, autocratic organizational infrastructure and the papal delusions of its founder. No vote by the Board of Directors, no documentation of charges, no hearing, no appeal. How tragic that one of the world's largest atheist organization is burdened with leadership whose rationality and good judgment is sporadic at best. I grant O'Hair full credit for her prior accomplishments, but her present status is that of atheism's albatross, the millstone round the neck of the freethought movement.

Incidentally, O'Hair and her cohorts aren't doing too splendidly in exemplifying the vaunted moral integrity of atheists; I have had to engage an attorney to attempt to recover my \$500.00 membership fee, which they conveniently forgot to refund at the time of my expulsion.

Tony Pasquarello
Dept. of Philosophy
Ohio State University

More on Child Abuse

David Sonenschein (Letters, FI, Winter 1985/86) raised many questions. Given that it may be true that "kiddie porn," child abuse, and missing children are being used by the Religious Right and the "helping" professions for their own purposes and that the number of incidences and frequency reported may be overblown, it doesn't follow that there isn't a problem. The fact that the issue has come out in the open is healthy for our society. It is the kind of concern that secular humanists and other people of good will should support. Measures to cut down on those incidences (so long as they're well thought out and remain within constitutional constraints) are not negative. However, we must remember that, unlike the anti-masturbation campaigns of the nineteenth century, the various forms of child abuse involve more than one person, and any form of social interaction is subject to review for approval or disapproval.

While Sonenschein's letter is full of obvious truths, we find that we cannot agree with one key statement: "Recently validated

(Continued on p. 65)

IN THE NAME OF GOD

God in the Constitution

Syndicated columnist William Rusher has advocated a constitutional amendment which would "acknowledge . . . the existence of a Supreme Being."

Rusher said that "in the opinion of many, this separation [of church and state] has sometimes been carried to almost ridiculous lengths."

While urging "careful phrasing," the columnist said his amendment "would simply acknowledge the dependence of the American nation on a divine creator, a belief in whose existence is shared by the world's major religions and certainly by those represented in the United States." (Church & State)

A "Good Christian" Country

An influential Christian group of eight citizen activists, broadcasters and journalists have returned from a 14-day fact-finding mission to South Africa with a plan to tell the untold story of South Africa, according to the trip's organizer, David W. Balsiger, founder-editor of the Biblical News Service, which publishes the multi-million-copy Presidential Biblical Scoreboard.

"South Africa is the most Christian nation in the world," says Balsiger. . . . "It's up to us to tell the 65 million members of the evangelical-conservative Christian community about what's really happening in South Africa, as the American news media has given a totally distorted view."

"Regarding South Africa's support of Judeo-Christian values, one is surprised to find prayer in school at all levels; abundant Christian broadcasting; a high level of church attendance; open exercise of religious freedom; no abortion; no newsstand pornography; no parental-child rights disputes; no ERA debates; no euthanasia or infanticide; very little homosexuality; and secular humanism has only established itself in isolated pockets on some college campuses," explains Balsiger. (Biblical News Service)

AIDS: The Wrath of God?

The president of the nation's largest Protestant denomination [has reiterated the view that] says God created acquired immune deficiency syndrome to show displeasure with America's acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle.

The Rev. Charles Stanley, head of the 14.3 million-member Southern Baptist Convention, said . . . "It is a sinful lifestyle, according to Scripture, and I believe that AIDS is God indicating his displeasure and his attitude toward that form of lifestyle, which we in this country are about to accept." . . . (United Press International)

Student Pledge Humanistic

I read a newspaper article detailing the preamble to the Little Rock Public Schools' student pledge. Let me repeat it as reported.

"I know that the greatest power in the world is the power of knowledge. I want to have knowledge. People who do not have knowledge miss out on opportunities that should be theirs."

I believe that making a student sign a pledge to take their education seriously is long overdue. But the question I raise is this: Is the power of knowledge the greatest power in the world?

I object to the first statement in your preamble on two grounds: 1. it is not accurate to say that the power of knowledge is the greatest power, and 2. asking children to declare knowledge as the greatest power is, in effect, asking them to worship knowledge. This is nothing more than "knowledge worship" commonly known as secular humanism . . . (Keith Hamaker, in a letter to the Little Rock, Arkansas, Democrat)

Religion Goes to Madison Avenue

In this secular age, some church groups are struggling much like package-goods market-

ers to convert nonusers to their product, whether it's the Bible or a specific brand of religion. The ads are slicker and less reverent than in the past, and they aren't confined to the religion pages of newspapers or to preachy, evangelical television shows. "You have to take risks and be provocative to get the customer's attention today," says the Rev. George Martin, executive director of the Episcopal Ad Project in Minneapolis. One of the project's print ads says: "The Episcopal Church welcomes you. Regardless of race, creed, color or the number of times you've been born."

The Episcopal church's latest ad features Henry VIII and the message: "In the church started by a man who had six wives, forgiveness goes without saying." . . .

Grey Advertising had hoped its commercial portraying the Bible as a source of cultural enrichment would breeze through the clearance departments of all three major TV networks. But the agency is butting heads with CBS. The primary hang-up: all those stained-glass windows. "We only showed images of real people," Mr. Giacchi of Grey contends. "We purposely avoided any wings or halos." But among those people are King David and Jesus. "By our policy," a CBS spokeswoman says, "they are not secular." . . . (Wall Street Journal)

Freud on Religion

Where questions of religion are concerned, people are guilty of every possible sort of dishonesty and intellectual misdemeanour. Philosophers stretch the meaning of words until they retain scarcely anything of their original sense. They give the name of God to some vague abstraction which they have created for themselves; having done so they can pose before all the world as deists, as believers in God, and they can even boast that they have recognized a higher, purer concept of God, notwithstanding that their God is now nothing more than an insubstantial shadow and no longer the mighty personality of religious doctrines. Critics persist in describing as "deeply religious" anyone who admits to a sense of man's insignificance or impotence in the face of the universe, although what constitutes the essence of the religious attitude is not this feeling but only the next step after it, the reaction to it which seeks a remedy for it. The man who goes no further, but humbly acquiesces in the small part which human beings play in the great world—such a man is, on the contrary, irreligious in the truest sense of the word. (Sigmund Freud, in *The Future of an illusion*)

(Letters, Continued from p. 63)

evidence shows that sexual contact between adults and children is not inherently 'pathological' or traumatic." Yes, there may be the rare case when an adult-child sexual contact leaves no mark, but minors can be at varying stages of sophistication and age, and we think that any sexual contact between an adult and a child should be questioned.

Yves Barbero and Marcia Clarke
San Francisco, Calif.

Humanists and Christmas

There is an obvious logic to the argument that those who do not believe in Christianity should not celebrate Christmas ("Should a Humanist Celebrate Christmas?" FI, Winter 1985/86). But Thomas Flynn's argument neglects the complex relationship between symbols and reality. Granted that decorating a tree, exchanging gifts, singing carols, etc., derive their meaning from religious beliefs. It is also true that these activities, including the most deeply religious paintings, transform the religious ideas into experiences that have value in themselves. When we exchange cards and gifts and greet each other with "Merry Christmas," most of us are more concerned with showing our friendly feelings than with expressing our belief that Christ came into the world about two thousand years ago to bear our sins and give us immortality. Does Flynn really believe that we have to believe in the story of the Magi to have pleasure in giving toys to children?

Humanists should welcome the secular implications of Christmas celebrations. We should be glad that all art, from the decoration of Christmas trees by children to the painting of the Sistine Chapel, from Christmas cards to the music of Bach and Handel, has the "insinuate possibilities of human experience not to be found in rule or precept," as John Dewey said (1934). The losing battle waged by moralists (since Plato) to constrict aesthetic experience to rules and precepts should be left to those who want not only to keep Christ in Christmas but to confine Christmas to Christian dogma. Humanists should join the large majority of people who try to enjoy as much of life as they can without worrying themselves about whether this enjoyment fits into pre-ordained rules.

It is in this perspective, one that regards humanism not as the destroyer of Christianity but as its successor, that I urge all humanists to celebrate Christmas. We can and do pour new wine into old bottles. And just as symbols, legends, and works of art

from pagan religions have enriched Christianity, so the legends, the customs, and the art of Christianity (as well as other religions) can be made to extend and deepen the humanist philosophy.

Lawrence W. Hyman
Ridgewood, N.J.

Thomas Flynn rightly argues that lying to children about Santa Claus is reprehensible, and that clear-thinking people should not kowtow to those who emphasize the supernatural elements of Christmas. But I think that he is overzealous in his call for a "total retreat from Christmas." While Christmas may have been religious in origin and history, this does not mean that it must be celebrated as such by everyone today. Fundamental Protestants refuse to allow their children to go out trick-or-treating on Halloween because it was originally a pagan holiday. But a child who puts on a mask on October 31 is not necessarily trying to emulate or dissuade evil spirits. Likewise, I am not necessarily accepting the divinity of Jesus if I give and receive presents on December 25. Ideas change. The religious can be made secular, the supernatural can metamorphose into the natural.

Andy Tubbesing
Parma, Ohio

Although I agree that secular humanists shouldn't celebrate religious holidays per se, I do think that there is a distinction to be made between the hypocritical observation of religious forms, such as observing Christmas or participating in a traditional Passover Seder, and the sincere participation in a celebration of secular ideals. If we allow the religionists to preempt the humanist's ability to create and hold celebrations and ceremonies of any kind because we are afraid of how it will look to the world, we are indeed giving up something precious. Celebrations are events that have numerous secular purposes and benefits.

Steven Seifert
Tucson, Ariz.

It's really sad when people become so dogmatic about their beliefs that children could be denied one of the great joys of childhood "on principle." Okay, so we're not Christians, but how shall we replace the joy of children on Christmas? Should it be just another drab day in a drab life, like that of a Jehovah's

Witness? Can we come up with an alternative celebration that will bring the light of excitement and happy expectation into a small child's eyes? Until we do, may I suggest that we use the familiar secular symbols and customs of Christmas, but with an alternative meaning for them?

Perhaps we could call the holiday "Family Day," as it is one of the few times when families get together. The emphasis could be on family love and reunion, as it should be. Certainly there could be a feast and gift-giving. If the date is offensive, we could move the holiday to January 1 to make this into a family New Year's Day.

L. M. Seekins
Stockton Springs, Me.

The Divinity of Moses

My comment in "Jesus in Time and Space" (FI, Fall 1985) that Moses was to be listed among those humans who achieved divine status prompted Joshua Hochstein to state that I was in error and that "there just aren't any 'divine-humans' in Judaism" (Letters, FI, Winter 1985/86). He notes that Moses was not worshipped and was without a shrine. May I present some of the evidence that lies behind my comment?

In the developing Judaism of the last years B.C.E. and in the early years of the Common Era, the process of divinizing Moses was well under way. In the pseudopigraphical work known as *The Assumption of Moses* (composed during the first century C.E.), Moses is made to say "He [god] designed and devised me, and He prepared me before the foundation of the world. . . ." (1:14). In other words, Moses, like Jesus (1 Peter 1:20), had a pre-existence—certainly a feature in the process of divinizing mortals.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, described the infant Moses as *morphe theon* (ANT. II:ix:10)—of divine form—which could be interpreted as referring to a beautiful child, but which does introduce the language of divinization (compare the description of Jesus as *en morphe theon*, Phil. 2:6). In discussing Moses' death, Josephus echoes the Deuteronomic account but adds another tradition in which Moses does not die but disappears down a valley, enveloped by a cloud (ANT. IV:vii:49), which reminds us of the physical disappearance of Jesus (Acts 1:9). The extant versions of *The Assumption of Moses* appear to have at one time contained the account of Moses' translation into heaven, and the Hebrew Apocalypse of Moses (*gedoloth moshe*) recorded that Moses was transformed into

a fiery angelic figure and was transported to heaven, where he was taken on a conducted tour through the seven heavenly levels (cf. R. H. Charles, *Pseudepigrapha*, p. 409, for other references).

In Christian scripture, when Jesus is magically transfigured he is visited by a luminescent Moses and a luminescent Elijah, both of whom have been transfigured earlier (Luke 9:28-36). These are angelic figures, and luminescence is a feature often employed to reflect divine attributes (cf. Paul's experience on the Damascus road, Acts 9:8; Gos is said to dwell in unapproachable light, 1 Tim. 6:16, etc.). Indeed, Moses' luminescence is foreshadowed in the Sinai story (Exod. 34:29-35), which the Alexandrian Jew Philo interpreted as a preparation for immortality (*Moses* II:51:288).

Obviously Moses did not achieve the stature of divinity given to Jesus, and shrines were not built to worship him. However, Jesus' disciples were prepared to build "booths" to honor Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. Of course, much later, during the Byzantine period (fourth-century C.E.) a shrine was erected on Mt. Nebo to honor Moses (cf. S. J. Saller, *The Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo*).

From these and other sources, it is quite clear that, in the minds of some Jews and Christians, Moses has achieved a status that places him among the inhabitants of heaven, the abode of the gods. He joins those other supernatural figures whose visionary appearances are recorded in both Jewish and Christian scriptures.

Gerald A. Larue
Brentwood, Calif.

Disciples of Satan

I have read all of the literature you sent and have come to the conclusion that you are actually a disciple of Satan, for no one that has accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and believes in God would make such statements and proposals. Let me advise you, and I would suggest that you take it very seriously, to reconsider your relationship with God and accept him with Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and ask him to help you change your life. Then study the Bible, read it from cover to cover, both the Old and New Testaments. Remember, if you don't believe in the New Testament you also cannot believe in the Old. If you don't do as I have suggested the Bible states that you

will go to a godless eternity.

Note: The Bible, in its entirety, is the inspired work of God and not once has it been proven wrong, which is a contrast to your belief, which is proven wrong every day. Unfortunately those individuals who have aligned themselves with you are in the same category.

Paul G. Spaulding
Syracuse, N.Y.

Classified Controversy

I wish to respond to Rita Bell (Letters, FI, Winter 1985/86), who opposed your publication of my classified ad. Granted the ad could have been longer and more explicit, which would have eliminated any potential for misinterpretation. However, the real danger is that Bell feels that atheists and agnostics must control their behavior so that the atonement-addicts can't criticize. We'll

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Name withheld by request

Correction

An editorial change introduced a fallacious inference into page 32 (left-hand column) of the text of the "Interview with Adolf Grünbaum" (FI, Winter 1985/1986). The passage originally read: "Formally speaking, this syllogism is deductively valid. Hence the warrant for presuming its conclusion to be true depends, of course, on the epistemic merits of the two premises." In the editorial process, the second of these two sentences was changed to read: "Hence the truth of its conclusions depends, of course, on the epistemic merits of the two premises."

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Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER)

The Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion was developed to examine the claims of Eastern and Western religions and of well-established and newer sects and denominations in the light of scientific inquiry. The Committee is interdisciplinary, including specialists in biblical scholarship, archaeology, linguistics, anthropology, the social sciences, and philosophy who represent differing secular and religious traditions. The only criterion for membership on the Committee is commitment to impartial scholarship and the use of objective methods of inquiry.

Gerald Larue (Chairman), emeritus professor of archaeology and biblical studies, University of Southern California at Los Angeles; **John Allegro**, former lecturer in Near Eastern and Old Testament Studies, University of Manchester (England); **Robert S. Alley**, professor of humanities, University of Richmond; **Michael Arnheim**, professor of ancient history, University of Witwatersrand (South Africa); **Joseph Barnhart**, professor of philosophy, North Texas State University; **Paul Beattie**, president, Fellowship of Religious Humanists; **H. James Bix**, chairman of Anthropology/Sociology Department, Canisius College; **Vern Bullough**, dean of natural and social sciences, State University of New York College at Buffalo; **Joseph Fletcher**, theologian, former professor of medical ethics, University of Virginia Medical School; **Antony Flew**, professor of philosophy, Reading University (England); **Van Harvey**, professor of religion, Stanford University; **Sidney Hook**, professor emeritus of philosophy, New York University; **Paul Kurtz**, professor of philosophy, State University of New York at Buffalo; **William V. Mayer**, director, Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, University of Colorado; **Delos McKown**, professor of philosophy, Auburn University; **Lee Nisbet**, associate professor of philosophy, Medaille College; **George Smith**, president, Signature Books; **A. T. Steegman**, professor of anthropology, State University of New York at Buffalo; **G. A. Wells**, professor of German, Birkbeck College, University of London (England); **Steven L. Mitchell** (ex officio), executive director, Academy of Humanism.

Biblical Criticism Research Project (CSER Subcommittee)

The Biblical Criticism Research Project (Subcommittee) was founded to help disseminate the results of biblical scholarship—studies in comparative religion, folklore, scientific archaeology, and literary analysis. It investigates the claim that the Bible is divinely inspired; the historical evidence for Jesus and other Bible personalities; the role of religious myth, symbol, and ritual; and the possibility of basing morality upon reason and experience instead of biblical doctrine. The Research Project's goals include compiling bibliographies of the best sources of information about the Bible, publishing articles and monographs about different facets of biblical research, and convening seminars and conferences.

R. Joseph Hoffmann (Chairman), associate professor of biblical studies, University of Michigan; **David Noel Freedman**, professor of Old Testament, University of Michigan; **Randel Helms**, professor of English, Arizona State University; **Robert Joly**, professor of philosophy, Centre Interdisciplinaire d'Etudes Philosophiques de l'Université de Mons (Belgium); **Carol Meyers**, professor of religion, Duke University; **James Robinson**, director, Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont College; **John F. Priest**, professor and chairman, Department of Religion, Florida State University; **Morton Smith**, professor of history, Columbia University; **Steven L. Mitchell** (ex officio), executive director, Academy of Humanism.